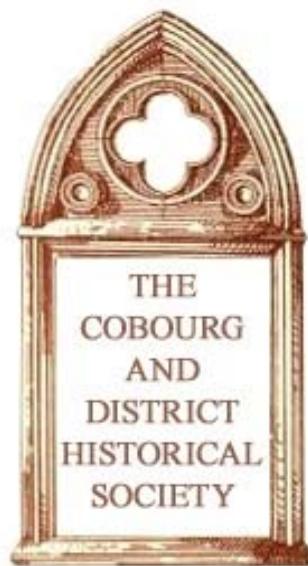


HISTORICAL REVIEW 28



2010

2011



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2010 – 2011

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Cover Photograph: The “Barracks” or Calcutt’s Brewery

September 2010

The Prime Minister's Daughter Declares her Love for the 'Notorious Lord Bury': Cobourg, October 1855.

by Donald B. Smith, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Calgary

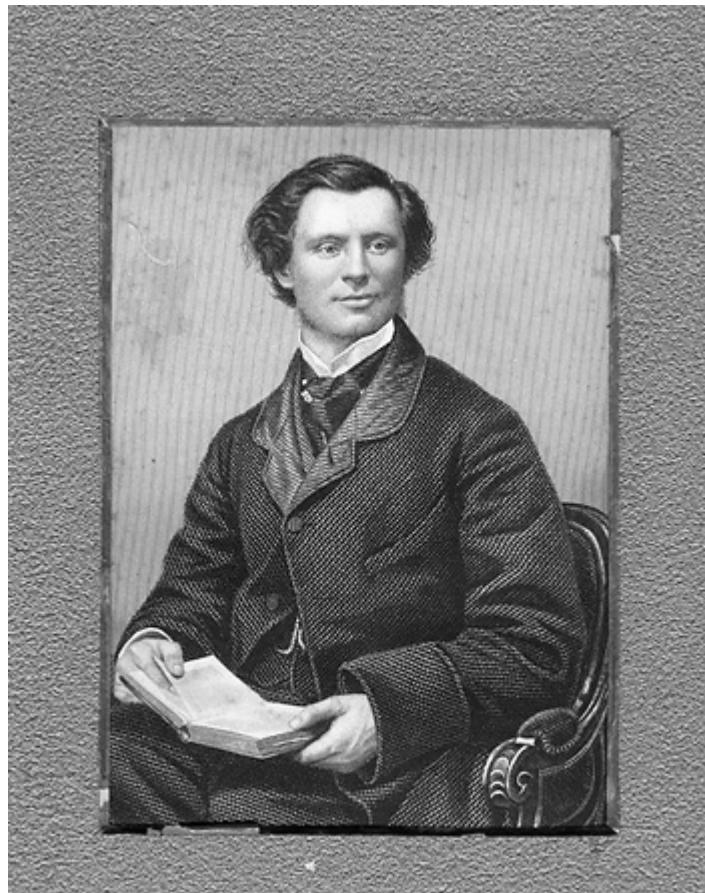
The New York *Times* ran a story on the "The Marriage of Lord Bury" in its issue of November 30, 1855. "The most prominent event of recent date in Canada is the marriage of the notorious Lord Bury." Notorious, because the Province of Canada's Superintendent General of Indian Affairs had been accused that August of allegedly embarking on a St. Lawrence excursion steamer to Riviere du Loup with a "female of bad character". Worse still, it was said, he had tried to bring his *compagnonne de voyage* to dine at the captain's table.

In 1855, at the age of 23, Lord Bury had administrative control over approximately 15,000 First Nations people in the Province of Canada, as Ontario and Quebec were then known. Bury's first months in office passed relatively uneventfully. Actually he showed more openness to First Nations people in his first half year or so in office than did many of his contemporaries. For instance, after visiting the Mount Elgin residential school at Muncey, near London, in the summer of 1855, he wrote: "There is no want of mental capacity in an Indian. In one, at least of the schools which I have visited, the scholars are fully equal, if not superior, to the average pupils of the common schools of the whites."

And at the end of his year as superintendent-general, in his major report to the imperial government, Bury called for the protection of Aboriginal lands. "Left to their own resources, he wrote, "the Indians would have no longer any defence against the whites, who forcibly squat upon their lands and plunder their timber."

His record in his portfolio of Indian Affairs was totally overlooked when the alleged sex scandal broke in August.

Newspapers throughout the Canadas took up the charges, in English and in French: The woman had been in his stateroom that day for 'a reason'. The *Brockville Recorder* thundered: "No



Lord Bury, 1857. Reproduced with permission of the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch.

virtuous woman can meet Lord Bury without damage to her reputation.” A vitriolic attack also came from the Chatham *Planet* in Canada West. “We are glad to see that the press is dealing with him in a proper manner -- castigating him in the right style without gloves. If he be allowed to set an example of immorality to Canadian youth, mock at common decency, openly and unblushingly violate public morality, and trample under foot all respect for those he should honor, what may we expect will eventually be its fruits.”

We know that interpretations of events can be multiple and conflicting, and that no historical interpretation is final in any respect. In a tone of self-contained aristocratic rage Bury, the twenty-three year old heir to the earldom of Albemarle, defended himself. He called for fair play. The former member of the Scots Guards, and aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief of Her Majesty’s Forces in Bombay, thundered back: “None of these statements are true.” The lady, whom he did not know at all, had been refused a stateroom. To protect the “defenceless woman,” he gave up his own, to her and her female servant. They had not gone together to the “table of the steamer at all.”

Some papers accepted his defence, for example Montreal’s *La Patrie*, which noted his politeness, his distinguished manners, and his conduct as a “vrai gentilhomme”. Others did not.

When the centre of government of the Province of Canada (today’s Ontario and Quebec) in early October 1855 returned to Toronto from Quebec, the Governor General took the opportunity to tour Canada West. Bury travelled with Sir Edmund and Lady Head. Premier MacNab and his attractive daughter Sophia came too, as did, amongst the other dignitaries, John A. Macdonald.

The “Bury Affair” surfaced prominently at one stop, the town of Cobourg. Sophia already knew well the young English aristocrat, whom she had met socially in Quebec City on many occasions. Here she would make a courageous statement.

In Kingston, all went well. Ladies joined the gentlemen at Kingston’s banquet for Sir Edmund. A contributor to the Kingston *Daily British Whig* later noted that, “Lord Bury had been the lion of the Kingston party.” However, at Cobourg, the next stop of the Vice-regal party, Cobourg’s ladies refused to “grace the festive board”, on account of Bury’s presence.

Throughout all of this the Governor General stood loyally by his Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. So did Sophia. In their opinion the ugly accusations had absolutely no substance. None of Bury’s alleged accusers, neither the steamer captain nor any of the passengers, had signed their names to a letter of protest. In Cobourg, Sophia, the prime minister’s daughter, defied the hostile eyes of many Cobourg women, by leaning on the arm of the notorious Lord Bury, as they walked through the fairgrounds of the provincial agricultural fair.

After visiting Hamilton the Governor General and entourage travelled next to London. En route, the train stopped briefly in the town of Ingersoll. Only one week earlier the *Ingersoll Chronicle* had carried the now well-known charges: “The stateroom occupied by Lord Bury and his companion on board the Saguenay, appeared on the Passenger List as taken by George Brown and lady.” Bury, the paper continued in hushed tones, entered first, then his companion, “crossed the saloon and joined him in his stateroom, where they spent a considerable part of the afternoon together, alone.” The Toronto *Globe* referred to the province’s superintendent general of Indian Affairs on October 30th, as “one who has outraged all the laws of propriety.”

The weight of public attention on him, the stares, the continuing “talk” in the papers despite his letter of defence, took their toll. While expected to attend, Bury failed to appear at the public banquet in London in Sir Edmund’s honour.

The *Montreal Gazette* had an interesting spin on the scandal’s impact on the superintendent general of Indian Affairs. Its Toronto correspondent wrote on October 26th: “Rumor says Lord Bury has resolved on a wise course to silence the scandal circulated respecting him. I say scandal, but there are many here who believe it perfectly true, and some of our best families were resolved to treat his lordship coldly accordingly. But now he is to be married, and so become respectable again.”

The well-informed circles proved correct. In early November Bury drew up his marriage settlement with Sophia MacNab. Their wedding was announced for November 15th, at the MacNab family home, Dundurn Castle, in Hamilton. The respectable Hamilton wedding silenced almost all the Canadian newspapers. John A. Macdonald later pronounced the Bury Affair, “dead and gone” in a letter written to a Montreal journalist in January 1856.

Lord Bury and Sophia had two marriage ceremonies at Dundurn Castle. As the *Hamilton Spectator* delightfully phrased it: “The Roman Catholic marriage ceremony, rendered necessary by the bride’s adherence to that faith, was performed at an early hour in the morning.” The second, more formal, Anglican ceremony followed the arrival of Sir Edmund Head, and Lady Head, and the numerous other distinguished guests, including several cabinet members amongst whom was the powerful Montreal politician, George-Etienne Cartier. That night the room became a ballroom for the celebration.

The Toronto wedding guests arrived by steamer. Sir Edmund Head and Lady Head left early that morning from Government House, southwest corner of King and Simcoe, now occupied by Roy Thomson Hall. With them came John Strachan, the Lord Bishop of Toronto. He assisted Sophia’s uncle, George Okill Stuart, the Anglican Archdeacon of Ontario, with the Anglican service in Dundurn’s principal reception area, the fully carpeted drawing room.

Even the mayor of Toronto attended. George Allan belonged to one of the city’s great wealthy families. A great friend of the arts Allan purchased many of the paintings of Toronto artist Paul Kane, after he returned from his painting expedition to the “North West.”

A lunch followed the Anglican wedding. The Governor General made an “exceedingly happy” speech to the health of the newly married pair, to which Lord Bury responded. After the lunch the 150 or so guests dispersed to return by cab that evening around eight for the dance in the



Sophie MacNab as drawn by Lord Bury, 1855. Dundurn National Historic Site, Hamilton, Ontario.

drawing room of Dundurn, so recently the chapel, now transformed into a ballroom. Dancing began at 9 p.m. and continued to 1 a.m., when a huge supper followed, marked by a fusillade of champagne corks. The popping of so many bottles, one journalist commented, made all imagine that Dundurn actually stood, "in the neighborhood of Sebastopol," a reference to the Russian fortress in the Crimea, that had just fallen to the Anglo-French and Turkish forces two months earlier. The newly married couple spent their honeymoon at Spencer Wood, the Vice-regal residence in Quebec City, at the invitation of His Excellency and Lady Head.

In January 1856 Lord Bury announced his intention to return to England with his Canadian bride. Sir Edmund accepted his resignation. Bury had provided more than enough excitement. As His Excellency wrote to his friend George Cornewall Lewis in England, the young aristocrat had gotten into several "scrapes", situations "which have bothered me considerably." Yet, this being said, he added this final comment about the future 7th Earl of Albemarle, "I hope he will do well yet. He has great abilities."

Back in England William Coutts Keppel, Lord Bury, indeed did very well. He ran and was elected to the House of Commons. In London commercial circles, he became a strong advocate of the practicability, and of the imperial importance, of a railway from the Province of Canada to the Pacific Coast.

The Keppels had a family of ten children. One child died as an infant but the three boys and six girls, grew up to healthy adulthood. Bury continued in politics, serving in the House of Commons for over a dozen years, then the House of Lords for nearly two decades. His love of writing led to four articles on Canadian affairs in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1857 and 1858. His big book on the British Empire, *The Exodus of the Western Nations*, his *magnus opus*, nearly 1000 pages long, followed in 1865. *The London Times* praised his examination of three centuries of settlement in the Americas, as a work that "shows very great research with honourable industry." Several articles on electricity, and an essay on modern philosophy, reveal his remarkably wide range of interests. His co-authored handbook on bicycling that came out in 1887, enjoyed great commercial success. It ran through five editions before his death in 1894.

A serious accident, in 1867, handicapped Bury's political career. The explosion of a rifle while he was firing it caused a permanent disability. The breech bolt entered his forehead. His doctors prescribed, "absolute surcease from any mental or political activity." Nevertheless he recovered well, even if he must henceforth avoid strenuous political activity. He founded in 1868 the Colonial Society in London, which later evolved in the Royal Commonwealth Society. In 1876 he was called up to the House of Lords as Baron Ashford during his father's lifetime, although customarily only one member of a family is a peer. On two occasions in the Lords he acted as the under-secretary for war, 1878-80 and 1885-86. Sophia acted as his private secretary, writing letters in her large clear hand. On Easter Day 1879 he converted to her church and became a Roman Catholic.

Bury succeeded to the family earldom of Albemarle on his father's death in 1891, but he himself died three years later. The 7th Earl of Albemarle was buried at the family seat, Quidenham, Norfolk. Sophia survived her husband for nearly a quarter-of-a-century. Several years after her husband's death his convent-educated widow had the discomfort to see Alice, the beautiful, vivacious wife of her third son George, become the mistress of the Prince of Wales. After the

Prince acceded to throne in 1901 as King Edward VII, Mrs. Keppel remained, “la favorita,” to quote the widely used phrase of the day, throughout the ten years of his reign.

The Dowager Countess of Albemarle died in 1917. Sixty-two years earlier she had publicly declared her love for her future husband at the Cobourg provincial exhibition, by walking beside him, by leaning on his arm, at the height of, “*l'affaire Bury*.” The wife of Prince Charles, the current Prince of Wales, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is a great great-granddaughter of Lord Bury and Sophia MacNab.

October 2010

The Renaissance of Canada's Naval Service

By Ken Scott and Tony Pitts



Ken Scott



Tony Pitts



100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANADIAN NAVY

2010 marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy which came into existence on May 4, 1910 when the Naval Service Act became law in parliament.

This anniversary is a celebration remembering the remarkable service of those men and women from cities, towns, villages and First Nations Communities across Canada who stepped forward to stand their watch at sea and on land for Canada's values. They came from every walk of life and had different motivations - whether it was patriotism, a sense of duty or adventure.

The establishment of the Canadian Navy was remarkable for its lateness. Canada, whose motto translates "from sea unto sea", has the longest coastline of any country. The need for a navy became apparent to most politicians of the day. There were many strategic considerations to be considered including sovereignty, protection of coastal fisheries and natural resources, the contribution to global security and representing Canadian interests in other parts of the world. - a Canadian Naval Presence was long overdue.

THE EARLY YEARS AND WW I

The Canadian Navy had humble beginnings with the purchase of two cruisers from the Royal Navy and the loan of 50 officers and 500 enlisted men. HMCS NIOBE arrived in Halifax on October 21, 1910 and HMCS RAINBOW in Esquimalt on November 7, 1910. Admiral Kingsmill became the first Director of the Naval Service. It was now imperative to recruit and train officers and men in these and other ships.

The Royal Naval College of Canada was established on January 11, 1911 and was located in the Halifax Dockyard.

With the lack of resources, the Canadian Navy was limited to safeguarding Canada's maritime interests during WW I with the help of a motley collection of seconded civilian vessels, war-built trawlers and drifters and American manned motor boats.

THE INTER-WAR YEARS

The Inter-war years was a gloomy period for Canada's navy maintaining a small fleet under severe monetary constraints. However, there were two very important developments. One was the development of the RCN Volunteer Reserve in 1923 by Admiral Walter Hose, the Director of the Naval Service at the time. The RCNVR brought the navy to 15 cities across Canada. Secondly, Hose trimmed the ambitions of the navy and concentrated on building a fleet of destroyers - seven were purchased and commissioned in the period.

WORLD WAR II

At the commencement of WW II in September 1939, the RCN had 13 ships and manpower of 3,500 regulars and reserves combined. By the end of WW II, Canada's navy had grown to the third largest allied fleet with close to 93,000 men and women and 400 ships - a remarkable achievement. Most of the crews on these ships consisted of "citizen sailors" (reservists) with a small cadre of regular force officers and petty officers. Canada's main contribution to the war effort was in the Battle of the Atlantic, one of the longest sea battles in history lasting from September 1939 to May 1945. Canada provided escorts for the numerous merchant ship convoys crossing the Atlantic from off the approaches of Halifax to Britain carrying vital supplies and facing the menacing gauntlet of German U Boats.

The men and women who served on navy and merchant ships must be remembered for their unselfish service to country and for the many bitter days on the North Atlantic Run suffering from the miserably cold temperatures, high winds, rolling seas, lack of sleep and worst of all, the continuous threat that they faced. They truly are all heroes - many never returned.

Canada's Navy contributed to the Allied war effort in many other ways. Notably, its River Class and Tribal Class destroyers and River Class frigates joined Royal Navy task groups in the English Channel and approaches during 1944/45 and served with distinction in these theatres of war. Sixteen Canadian minesweepers were conducting their important work in the English Channel.

Canada also contributed significantly during the Normandy Invasion of 1944 by providing fire support and bombardment of shore targets on Juno Beach. HMCS PRINCE DAVID and HMCS PRINCE HENRY provided landing craft flotillas for the landing of Canadian troops and a Canadian Motor Torpedo Boat 29th Flotilla engaged German fast attack craft attempting to lay mines.

Canadian destroyers served as convoy escorts on the Murmansk Run and were involved in a number of operations in combating the German U-Boats, aircraft and surface fleet in the northern waters off Norway.

CANADA'S CORVETTE NAVY (WW II)

Designed along the lines of a whale catcher for coastal duty with the Royal Navy, the corvette was chosen by the RCN because it was simple and could be built cheaply by Canadian shipyards. Canada put 123 corvettes to sea in WW II, 111 of the original Flower Class designed in the United Kingdom and 12 of the larger Castle Class. In many ways, the corvette was Canada's signature ship - greatest in number, total crew and community connection with most named after villages, towns and cities in all the provinces. The North Atlantic was the main theatre of Canadian naval activity and the Newfie-Derry Run between St. John's Newfoundland and Londonderry in Northern Ireland was the primary convoy route. Merchant ship losses were heavy particularly early in the war when the navy sailors were green and poorly trained, and escorts were thrown together in groups with inadequate training in tactics and teamwork. Corvettes also served in many other theatres including the English Channel, Gulf of St. Lawrence, Mediterranean, Caribbean and Canada's West coast.

Arnold Trask of Digby, N.S. observed that "service on board was monotonous and debilitating for long periods, either because of the need for constant vigilance in the face of the twin dangers of the sea and the enemy, or because of the cold in the North Atlantic. When action came, it could be prolonged and brutal with the sight and the aftermath of the sinking of freighters or other warships."

HMCS COBOURG

HMCS COBOURG was a revised Flower Class Corvette that was built in the Midland Shipyards in 1943 and commissioned on May 11, 1944. HMCS COBOURG served with distinction as a patrol escort for North Atlantic convoys that assembled off Halifax and then crossed the Atlantic which was a perilous voyage challenging the gauntlet of German U Boats waiting in their path. The COBOURG'S home port was St. John's Newfoundland with Londonderry on the other side.

Gordon Johnson, the Commanding Officer, was a lean and serious man with an oval, boyish face on top of his six-foot-six-inch frame. He was not a war-like man but he knew how to play the deadly game. He had a precise mind of the chartered accountant that he was, a fact he concealed from his seniors lest they assign him to some pay branch job ashore. He formally joined the RCNVR in the first days of the war when he was 23. His rise to command of the COBOURG, was rapid after serving on Atlantic convoy duty aboard HMCS CARIBOU, HMCS VEGREVILLE and HMCS SPIKENARD.

KOREAN WAR

It was only five years before Canada was involved in another war - the Korean War, from 1950 to 1953. The Canadian government responded quickly by dispatching 8 Tribal and Crescent class destroyers in support of UN forces off Korea. These ships were deployed in the screening of aircraft carriers, participating in blockades off the coast of Korea and providing fire support against Korean naval and land targets.

THE COLD WAR AND BEYOND

In the 1960's and 70's, the Canadian Navy faced many challenges including years of uncertainty, financial constraints, unification, low morale and a dwindling source of trained personnel. The post war navy was designed as a fleet with predominantly anti-submarine capabilities. However, circumstances quickly changed with a need for more diversity in its capabilities. There was a need for modern command, control and communication systems and the need to handle the threat of missiles from the surface and the air - these were the realities facing modern navies.

THE RENAISSANCE OF CANADA'S MODERN NAVY

In December 1977, after years of cutbacks, the Canadian Government announced a plan to build a fleet of Canadian Patrol Frigates. This was the start of the renaissance of Canada's modern navy. Over the next 30 years the Navy's fleet structure was dramatically transformed to reflect today's fleet with 12 Halifax Class (Multi Role Patrol Frigates), 12 Kingston Class (Coastal Defence Vessels), 3 Iroquois Class (Area Air Defence Destroyers), 2 Protecteur Class (Auxiliary Oil Replenishment Ships) and 4 Victoria Class (Long range Patrol Submarines).

Canada's Navy continues to serve proudly in many parts of the world both in war and peace operations. Some recent actions familiar to most Canadians include:

- Participation in the Persian Gulf War
- Enforcing UN Sanctions in the Adriatic to restrain ethnic violence in Yugoslavia
- Participation in Operation Apollo in the Arabian Sea - war on terror
- Participation in NATO's ongoing effort to secure the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia - counter piracy operations
- Deployment in the Arctic over the last seven years
- Humanitarian aid to Somalia (World Food Program), assistance after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and the recent relief efforts in Haiti

Indeed, Canada's Naval Service ever sails proudly and lives up to the motto "Ready, Aye Ready."

November 2011

Sandford Fleming - Beginnings

Jean Murray Cole

Most Canadians are familiar with the name of Sandford Fleming and his prominent role in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and its importance in the opening of Canada westward to the Pacific Ocean. And we are familiar with his picture too, in the iconic photo of the driving of the last spike at Craigellachie, B.C., on November 7, 1885, which appeared over and over again in newspapers and on television in the past few weeks as we marked the 125th anniversary of that day, with Sandford Fleming, the large man in a top hat standing immediately behind Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona), who performed that duty. We were reminded of him again last week by the *Globe and Mail* when they ran a picture of Fleming introducing his concept of Standard Time which was adopted in North America on November 18 1883.

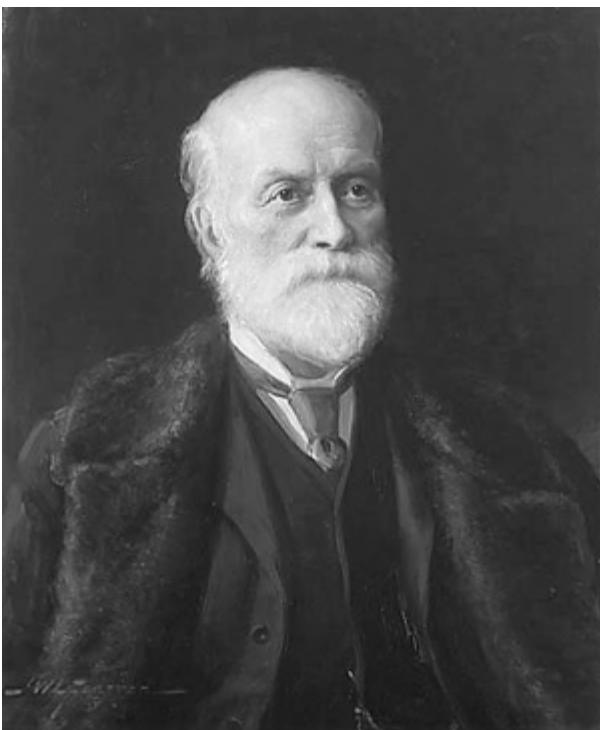
Fleming's association with the CPR began in 1872 when he became chief engineer for the railway and embarked on his first Ocean to Ocean tour, to get a sense of the western landscape and make some preliminary plans for surveying and mapping the route across the prairies and the mountains to the coast. Among the small traveling group was his eldest son Frankie and his great friend, Rev George M Grant, of Halifax, who kept the journal of the expedition. Mapping railways was not new to Fleming. He had already directed the survey of the Ontario Northland Railway in the 1850s, and the Intercolonial that linked central Canada and Halifax in the 1860s.

Even before that, he had experience as a boy in Scotland - apprenticed at age fourteen to a prominent Fifeshire surveyor (John Sang) - surveying railways between Perth, Dundee and Edinburgh.

Tonight I would like to talk about how that all came about. Who was the young man who went on to such major achievements? Sandford came to Canada in 1845 at age 18, with his 20 year old brother David. Their father, Andrew Fleming, had friends who had emigrated successfully to Canada and he was thinking of selling his furniture business in Kirkealdy, near St Andrews, and moving his large family to Upper Canada in hopes of a more promising future for his six sons and two daughters. Sandford and David were the advance party, sent out to report back to their parents on what they thought of the possibilities. Andrew's cousin, Dr John Hutchison, was practicing medicine in Peterborough and had recently visited his Scottish relatives. He encouraged the move and offered to provide a home base for the boys and assist with introductions. David, a skilled carver, took the first job offered with the Trent Severn Waterway, but after a few unpleasant hot summer weeks working on the locks at Crooks Rapids (now Hastings), he moved on to a small furniture maker in Toronto. Soon he found more congenial employment at Jacques and Hay, one of the city's largest manufacturers.

Sandford had a harder time getting his foot in the door in his chosen profession. Though sometimes discouraged, his natural optimism and willingness to undertake any job that came his way, gradually brought him into the influential circle of engineers and architects who were carrying out most of the planning and building throughout the region. He was a talented artist and in his early years he had many assignments from architects like Frederic Cumberland, Kivas Tully, J. Stoughton Dennis and others, drawing perspectives and plans of some of their designs.

He was naturally gregarious and full of creative ideas; what is more, he followed through on his proposals. He happily agreed to give classes in geometry, arithmetic and drawing, at the Mechanics Institute, and with a group of friends he made there he was one of the founding members of the (Royal) Canadian Institute, an organization that began with a small group of engineers and architects and grew to include university professors, medical men and many other professionals. The Institute and its offshoot the Canadian Journal were to absorb much of his time and interest all the rest of his life. It also established him in the circle of influential professional men who would be so important to his future success. It was Frederic Cumberland who hired him as assistant engineer on the Ontario, Simcoe and Lake Huron Railway (later the Ontario Northland) in August 1852, and three years later Sandford became the chief engineer, his first senior railway job.



Sandford Fleming (photo left) began keeping his diaries on January 1 1845 - one week before his 18th birthday. For the rest of his life he continued to keep a record of his thoughts and daily activities in these diaries that are now preserved in the Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa. I first came upon them when I was doing research for Hutchison House Museum in Peterborough, where Fleming is a key part of the interpretation of the house and of school programs. My emphasis has always been on his early years because it was to Hutchison House and to Dr John Hutchison that he and his brother David came when they first arrived in Canada. That the diaries are so rich, revealing the many attributes of this remarkable young man was our good fortune.

His creativity, his enthusiasm, his ambition, his perseverance, his loyalty, his sense of fun all

shine through their pages. That the diaries are often illustrated by his talented hand is an added bonus.

Even as a boy Fleming had kept small notebooks which still survive - full of sketches and problem solutions, chess puzzles, scientific 'inventions'. School programs at the museum often feature wooden replicas made by one of our volunteers for the on-line skates he invented back around 1843. A daily diary was just a step further and no doubt one of the reasons for keeping a more formal record was that he and his brother were proposing to leave their family home in Kirkcaldy, that spring and embark for a new life Canada, and he would have the excitement of all the new experiences to write about. That he chose to make the first entry on New Year's Day says something about his sense of order - in later years he always had a special summing up when a New Year began.

In 1845 the diary gave him an opportunity to record the preparations for their journey, the visits to old friends and relatives, special celebrations and the final farewells. Glasgow, Thursday, April 24: "The vessel cleared out from the wharf about halfpast 1 P.M. It was tugged

down the river by a steamer & we took farewell of my Father who followed her to the end of the wharf & gave us three cheers along with Robt Barclay It was a fine spring day. The sun was high in the heavens & the scenery along the banks of the Clyde was truly beautiful. We left Glasgow in the distance among the mist & windings of the Clyde. A bold promontory comes into view, on which is built an obelisk with the inscription 'to Henry Bell.' On passing this we see Dunbarton Castle & the town of Dunbarton behind. The Clyde is a complete thoroughfare of steamers & vessels of every description, one is struck how so narrow a river can be so deep in proportion as to carry up so large vessels. We now arrive at Greenock where we lay for some time. The Captain went on shore, I suppose to get a new Pilot for the Firth of Clyde. The scenery here is far from being inferior to any we yet passed, the hills & valleys and the entrance to Loch Long &c make a beautiful landscape. And while admiring the beauties of nature one is apt to forget they are leaving all behind, perhaps never to be seen again. Night comes on & the Pilot guides us safely to the Irish Sea by the lighthouses studded along the shore. We go to bed for the first time on the Deep & the steamer leaves us next morning at about 3 o'clock." Friday, April 25: "Up at 5. The only land that we see is Ailsa Craig, due south amongst the mist, a steep-sided island & apparently very rocky. In a short time an island to the north makes its appearance and about 11 A.M. the Mull of Kintyre due north, and in about an hour the last of Scotland disappears."

It was a rough six-weeks passage, vividly described, and illustrated with beautiful drawings of ships at sea, scenes on deck, ice bergs, and sights along the St Lawrence River, and, after changing ships in Quebec City, via the Ottawa River, through the Bytown Locks (Ottawa) and along the Rideau Canal as they neared Lake Ontario, Kingston, and their destination. They embarked at Cobourg - "a nice healthy little town apparently thriving very well. Being on the banks of Lake Ontario it is just like a seaport town there being nothing to be seen but the lake on one side of the horizon." They were too late to catch the steamer from Rice Lake up to Peterborough that day but they found a farmer with a cart, willing to take them up the alternate route - the rude corduroy road via Baillieboro to the Hutchisons home. Peterborough - to him "looked rather a poor like place where we entered, the stumps of trees still in the middle of the streets, a wood house here & there with a few good villas with verandahs around in the suburbs." This first impression was dispelled somewhat next day when the doctor showed them around downtown. "There are some good shops & stores ... and a large court house & cells which we went through ... The place looks very well down about the river - it is more than half the size of the Clyde at Glasgow ... A part of the town is on the other side of the river which is crossed by a wooden bridge. It consists of about 2,000 inhabitants."

It wasn't until August that Sandford ventured to Toronto to seek out potential employers. While he waited for Dr Hutchison to find time to accompany him to the city and make some introductions, he spent his time working in the Hutchison garden, rerouting the little stream (Jackson Creek) that passed through the property, going out on calls with the doctor, out to the Indian reserves at Mud Lake (Curve Lake) and Hiawatha where Dr Hutchison was the appointed physician, stopping along the way to see any patients on the doctor's list and check on their wellbeing. They went down to Asphodel where he met Richard Birdsall, surveyor of much of Peterborough County and environs, who later did provide Fleming with several small jobs. Finally, tired of waiting, he went to the city on his own.

Sandford found Toronto discouraging. He went to the office of the Canada Company, to present his letter of introduction from Edward Ellice, a Scottish neighbour from Balbirnie who was an influential member of the London boards of both the Canada Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, but he was told that the survey work on their 1000-acre Huron Tract was almost completed, although they did give him a few copying jobs. He saw Sir Allan MacNab who promised to write a reference for him to an engineer in Hamilton but promptly forgot all about it and left with his wife on a trip to England without providing the letter. Casimir Gzowski, then chief engineer for roads and harbours, was even more pessimistic. He advised the young man to return to Scotland, a path Sandford refused to consider. It was John Howard, a prominent architect and officially the City Surveyor, who gave him some encouragement. "He thinks Mr Gzowski and others wish to monopolize & frighten all young men out of the country. Mr Howard says he was ten times worse off than I am at first, lived in a garret for half a year and was very badly off, but he has not had rest since, and he believes Mr Gzowski the Pole was as bad as himself at first and had now 6 or 7 hundred a year."

Sandford decided to go to Hamilton to investigate possibilities there. Several of his father's friends had become established there and had offered to introduce him. Unfortunately, it turned out to be no more hopeful than Toronto, and by Christmas he was back in Peterborough, clerking over the holiday season in a dry goods store owned by James Hall, the local MLA and friend and neighbour of the Hutchisons who would later become his father-in-law. In January he went down to Richard Birdsall's, in Asphodel, to work at copying Birdsall's plan for a road from Kingston to Ottawa, and spending the evenings teaching Birdsall's young sons to draw.

While his professional life was moving slowly, Sandford had much to occupy his leisure hours. He made friends easily and often took the lead in creating diversions. In Peterboro he joined with a group of young people in many activities, swimming in summer in the river that flowed through the centre of town, picnics and excursions to nearby campsites and frequent parties and dances in town all year round. With his Toronto contemporaries he met frequently for games of 'Logic' and most evenings chess games preceded any other scheduled events. And the Institute involved more than just the Saturday evening meetings, with committees to organize special events and to plan the Journal.

He and David took time out for a trip to Niagara and he gives a lovely description of the Falls as they were before commercialization. Saturday June 27, 1846: "Left on the afternoon boat for Niagara along with David, Mr & Mrs Holland [Martha Hutchison's brother and sister-in-law]

and her Father & Mother. We had a very heavy shower in crossing the lake but it cleared the atmosphere. We had a delightful sail up the river with the British grounds on the right hand & the American on the left. We arrived at Queenston, crossed over to Lewiston where we were for the first time on American soil We crossed the river again after dark in a small boat & put up at Queenston." Sunday, June 28: "After breakfast Mrs Cowan (Mrs Holland's mother), a firm pious old Scotch woman, with David & I went up to the top of Queenston Heights to see Brock's monument. Did not stop long & started in the railroad cars for the Falls about 7 miles off. The Railroad goes first in a westerly direction along the face of the hill ... until it reaches the permanent level, then it crosses a beautiful partly cultivated country in a direct course to the falls. As we occasionally stop at different stations we hear the falls like distant thunder. At last, when stopping at the Pavilion Hotel, we see the white spray rising from behind the trees a little bit to our left. We first went up to the top of the Pavilion Hotel where we had a fine view of the

rapids & river above the falls & just saw the whole falling down amongst the spray. We descended the steep bank of the river & landed a little above the falls & walked down by the side of the rushing waters. We are now on the Table Rock, the immense waterfall before our eyes & eternity under our feet. The ledge of rock is only about 1 foot or 15 inches in thickness & projects several yards beyond its support & points towards the river like Condor Cape We gaze on here but who could hurry away from it, or when gazing does not feel their nothingness. Mr brother, Mr Holland & I having made up our minds to go under the sheet of water, we got a guide who recommended us to take off all our clothes & put on others which he supplied. We descended a long flight of circular steps with our loose oilskin clothes dangling around us. We reach the bottom at last, and follow the guide along a narrow path with massive rocks projecting far over our heads & a steep bank of shale & broken fragments of rocks rising from our own feet into the milk white water. When entering under the sheet of water a strong current of wind rushes out, dashing the spray in our faces. This is soon over & everything is hid from our view except the ponderous falling water which before reaching the bottom is altogether formed into white spray owing to the tremendous descent. As the place is not altogether free from danger (from pieces of falling rock &c) it is advisable not to stop long but none of us would have lost the sight for anything. In coming out we take another look all around us. With the awful grandeur of the scenery & the immense quantity of water falling before our eyes, the noise of which sounds like thunder in our ears, who would not be struck dumb with amazement, or who could attempt the shadow of a description. There are many other places of amusement about the neighbourhood such as museums, camera obscura &c but who could look at them while Niagara is before your eyes. These can be seen in many places but on this Globe there is only one Niagara."

That first year in Canada Sandford was anxious to find some permanent work. He had decided after his time at Richard Birdsalls that he could produce a large map of Peterborough and take advance orders that would at least bring him some income. With tools borrowed from Birdsall, he hired a chain bearer and set to work in snowy and blustery February 1846 with the temperature at four degrees below zero Fahrenheit. It wasn't long before he realized that he wasn't dressed for the job so he ordered a pair of long boots and had a new coat made - "Beaver on one side and strong Canadian blue cloth on the other and made for surveying men." By late June he was back in Toronto at Scobie and Balfour's printing plant, doing odd jobs for Hugh Scobie, producing and selling an engraving of St James Cathedral, and waiting for a new large press that would accommodate the outsized Peterborough plan.

The Peterborough map proved to be a successful venture, in spite of the delay in the arrival of the lithograph stone. By September 1846 he was back in Peterborough, delivering pre-ordered copies and making more sales. He had printed 235 maps "with considerable difficulty, it being the first long job for the press & stones & the first attempt of this of my own. However they are no disgrace to me considering everything & they are without boasting the largest and perhaps best work of the kind ever done in Canada."

Of the diaries kept by Fleming throughout the rest of his 89 years only one year is missing. Unfortunately that is the year 1847 - the year he spent considerable time in Cobourg, the year his parents and younger brothers and sisters came to Canada, and the year Dr Hutchison died of typhus, tending the sick Irish immigrants in the hospital tents set up on edge of Little Lake in Peterborough to cope with the epidemic. I am not altogether sure that there was a diary for

1847. Fleming's 1846 diary peters out in the summer and only one long entry in September sums up the important events of the last half of that year. He may have felt that he hadn't much to write about, although there is no indication in his philosophical note when he resumes his journal on January 1, 1848, that there has been a gap. Fortunately letters have been preserved. Both Sandford and David wrote frequently to their parents back in Scotland, telling of their activities and giving advice about the family's proposed departure for Canada, and there are also letters to them from Dr Hutchison in a similar vein.

Encouraged by the results of the Peterborough project, Sandford decided that Cobourg, then a population of about 3,500, would provide a good subject for a similar map and his proposal to the Corporation of the town was accepted. "I have agreed to do it for 35 pounds provided I get a sufficient number of subscribers for plans after they are engraved. Before commencing the survey I am going round with one of the Board getting subscribers names," he wrote to his parents. "Although this town is much larger it will be easier work than Peterboro. The snow is only 3 or 4 inches deep, level ground & no river to trouble me." By mid February he had moved down to Cobourg.

At around this time railways were much in everyone's thoughts and small companies were being formed in different parts of Upper Canada proposing to build lines in all directions. One of these was the Peterborough Port Hope Railway company and meetings were held to discuss its formation and to recruit investors. Fleming wrote to his father from Peterboro on February 7 1847: 'The Peterboro & Port Hope Railway Company have got an Act & part of the stock taken up and the work would go on - It may not go down immediately but I do not think there is much doubt but it will go on soon.' A short time later Dr Hutchison reported in a letter to Andrew Fleming that Sandford had been appointed second engineer on the Peterborough & Port Hope Railway.

This railway never materialized, and it was at about the same time that plans for a proposed railway from Cobourg to Rice Lake was abandoned. The Cobourg Railway had originally been chartered in 1834 and had numerous, though not enough, investors and even appointed the well known N.H.Baird as engineer to look into various proposed routes. It moved very slowly and by December 1845 its charter had lapsed. In October 1847, after petitions from local citizens for a plank road to be built from Cobourg with ferry access to Rice Lake, an agreement was signed with the stagecoach operator William Weller to run the service. The plank road proved susceptible to frost and other damaging conditions and was, in the end, given up after only two years. There is some indication that Fleming worked on planning the route of the plank road, but by 1848, while he was still spending considerable time in Cobourg, things were looking up for him in Toronto and he made his headquarters at his family's new home there.

Sandford completed his lithographed map of Cobourg, though sales were slow, and followed up with another large sized plan, this time of the Newcastle & Colbome District. When he resumed his diary in January 1848 he was at work at Scobie & Balfour engraving a view of St Peter's Church, Cobourg, and, at the town's request, making a design for a Cobourg Town Hall. January 5: "It may never be of any pecuniary advantage to me but it is practice and they may probably take my unsold plans of Cobourg as a sort of remuneration for me." By February he was getting the first proofs from the stones of his Newcastle & Colborne map.

Throughout the year 1848 Sandford moved about between Peterborough, Cobourg and Toronto, where his parents settled temporarily after their arrival late in the preceding year. Andrew soon decided to purchase a mill west of the city on the Humber river and the family moved out there in the spring with much help from David and Sandford, planting gardens and an orchard and dealing with many breakdowns in the mill operations. Other difficulties arose with the mill's former owner and it wasn't long before Andrew gave up that venture and moved back into Toronto. They rented a house at Richmond and Victoria streets and turned their garden into a lumber yard., but within a short time he bought property near Collingwood where he farmed for the rest of his life.

In Toronto Sandford spent much time at Scobie and Balfour's printing plant, engraving his own projects, including his map and drawing of Cobourg, and doing a variety of jobs for the firm. In May he was engaged part-time by the prominent surveyor J Stoughton Dennis - "agreed to serve him 6 months as a step to me getting a license provided I give the time 3 months' work." As John Colborne had strongly recommended, he was preparing to sit for exams in Montreal to get his qualifications as a Canadian surveyor.

One major undertaking that Dennis started him on was the large map of Toronto that adorns the cover of Sandford Fleming's Early Diaries, a project that monopolized much of his time and energy for nearly three and a half years. He was assured that the surveys were already done, except for the Military Garrison Reserve that he was engaged to do separately. His job was just to draw the plan to scale and do the engraving. He found that the survey sketches he was given were inadequate and he had to resurvey much of the terrain. It lengthened the time it took to do the job but in many ways it was a chore that he enjoyed, particularly the work on the Toronto Harbour which captured his interest and led to the elaborate plan that he created a few years later. Would that it had been carried out. On February 20 1853 the diary entry reads: "Mind a good deal excited - couldn't sleep well- got up to get a smoke between 2 and 3 o'clock. Conceived an idea of Grand Esplanade Toronto Harbour. Front street planted with trees - arrangements for 5 Railway termini - space for 10 tracks - site for a Canadian Museum at intersection of Esplanade & Yonge St!!" Cumberland adopted the plan as his own but as we all know it never materialized.

The city at that time stretched northward from Lake Ontario to around College Street, with the business centre around King Street. Areas to the west and north - the Military Reserve and the new Garrison out Queen Street west (which in part surrounded the new Lunatic Asylum), and the Don-Danforth plank road were as yet undeveloped, and would later be surveyed by Fleming himself. Sandford was becoming known and building a growing reputation. Many small surveying jobs came his way to provide some variety along with his work for Dennis and the ongoing work on the large Toronto map.

In May 1849 Sandford went to Montreal to write the Canadian surveyor's examinations. James Hall, MLA, his Peterborough mentor, who was a member of the legislature's railway committee, invited him to make a presentation to that group while he was there. Sandford spent a productive month, meeting prominent people, seeing the sights, including an excursion out to the Lachine Railway. The whole experience broadened his perspective in many ways and renewed his enthusiasm - and his optimism.

From that time on things moved quickly. Soon after his return to Toronto from Montreal, he and his great friend Frederick Passmore met with a small group in Kivas Tully's office and made plans to call together a larger group of professional men with the idea of forming a Canadian Institute, to meet regularly to exchange ideas and to present papers on their subjects of interest. After a few months there came a Saturday evening when only Fleming and Passmore showed up. Without a pause, they went ahead with the meeting, passed several resolutions, and issued a notice of the program for the next meeting. All was back on track. Their first Conversazione was a gala evening attended by 70 to 80 of the city's leading citizens and the Institute has carried on unabated ever since. Sandford's lifelong interest in the Institute became a time-consuming preoccupation that encompassed all the group's activities, including a museum collection which later helped to create the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Canadian Journal, which they first published in 1852. Fleming himself was a prolific writer and his illustrated paper on Nottawasaga was one of the earliest published in the Journal. There were many more to come. He left a legacy of some 150 published articles, reports, books and pamphlets - along with his unpublished diaries.

Railway building was much in the air and Fleming took every opportunity to put his name forward. His Montreal sojourn had introduced him to some of the prominent investors and gradually he was called in for small exploratory jobs. In 1851 came a more significant move. He was engaged by the St Lawrence and Huron Railway to survey Gloucester Harbour, off Georgian Bay, and this began his work in that area which culminated in his appointment in August 1852 as assistant engineer for the Ontario, Simcoe and Lake Huron Railway, a line that was actually built, later to become the Ontario Northland.

Frederic Cumberland, chief engineer and member of the O.S.& L.H. Board, who knew Fleming's work well, engaged him in August 1852 as assistant engineer, to be in charge of the mapping and survey crews in the field, and when Cumberland moved on to other interests Sandford became Chief Engineer.

It was arduous work but he thrived on it. He was back in Toronto often and tried to attend the Saturday evening Institute meetings as often as possible. He made many friends in the Collingwood and Saugeen regions and invested in land there in hopes of benefitting from its expansion when the railway was completed. His crew chained and sounded over rugged terrain, camping out in all weather. On his 25th birthday, working on the Gloucester Harbour survey, he invited a few friends to join his crew at their camp on the shore of Sturgeon Point for a "tea party". It snowed all the day before and was "a bitter morning. Several of us got nose, ears and fingers a little frozen. Chained today about 8 miles. My birthday anniversary in the camp, had a blowout after tea with Cake and Hot Scotch - Laid down star line about half past nine. Clear cold moonlight!"

So began Sandford Fleming's railway career. Much has been written about the later years. After 10 years on the Northland railway he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Intercolonial, linking Quebec with the Maritimes. With his wife Jeanie Hall, the Peterborough girl he had wed in 1855, he moved his growing family to Halifax where they spent many happy years, returning every summer after he moved on to the Canadian Pacific Railway and they established a new home in Ottawa. From 1872, when he got the CPR appointment and made his first westward journey, to 1876 when the first train arrived in Quebec City from Halifax, he supervised both projects simultaneously. Fleming left the CPR in 1880 after considerable friction with some of

the principals involved, although he was later appointed to the CPR Board, and a Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. He still had much to occupy him.

Since the 1870s Fleming had been speaking at gatherings around the world promoting the idea of a prime meridian with time zones to regulate time. His persistence led to the adoption of Standard Time in North America in 1883, and universally when representatives of 25 nations from around the world gathered in Washington for the International Prime Meridian Conference a year later and established Greenwich, England, as the prime meridian.

Many honours came his way in the later years. In 1882 he was awarded the "Freedom of Kirkcaldy" by his home town and two years later St Andrew's University presented him with an honorary degree, followed by honorary degrees from Columbia University, New York, the University of Toronto, and Queen's University, Kingston, where he served as Chancellor (with his old friend Rev George Grant as Principal) for 35 years until his death in 1915. He was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael & St George in 1877 and knighted by Queen Victoria in 1897, her Jubilee Year.

These diaries of his early years give us a rare glimpse of the young Sandford Fleming. Before he was 20 (and before Thomas Edison was born) - he rigged up an 'electrifying machine' to sell at St John's Church Bazaar. There was more of the same as the years went by. His inventive mind never stopped working. The journals reveal the qualities and influences that affected the course of his later career and led him to his prominent place in Canada's story.

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Hot off the Presses: The role of early Cobourg newspapers in creating community

Rob Washburn

Mr. Gregory, Mr. Strauss, members of the executive and, in particular, Ms. Rostetter-Saunders, I wish to start by thanking the Cobourg and District Historical Society for this incredible opportunity. This is an organization with a rich history of its own. While the most recent incarnation was formed in 1980, the society dates back to 1901. When I think about all the people who have stood where I am tonight, I am deeply honoured to be speaking.

My presentation this evening, "Hot off the Presses: The role of early Cobourg newspapers in creating community", explores something rarely tackled by mainstream academia. If you review most studies done by historians and mass communications scholars, the tendency is to look at the mainstream media of the day. This tends to be large urban newspapers like George Brown's *Globe*, Joseph Atkinson's *Toronto Star* or John Ross Robertson's *Evening Telegram*. Even the *Kingston Whig Standard* and the *London Free Press* are given more attention than many of the smaller rural papers that made up the backbone of the industry during the early years.

Newspapers like the *Midland Free-Press*, the *Owen Sound Comet*, the *Streetsville Review* or *Picton Times* should not be ignored.

Author J. George Johnston, in his book *The Weeklies*, made a compelling case for the importance of these newspapers in the fabric of the development of our country. But he begins the book with a quote from our own R. D Chatterton, the founding publisher of the Cobourg *Star* in the January 11, 1831, from the *Prospectus* – a kind of declaration of principles for the publication:

"In the conduct of this paper neither expense nor exertion will be spared to make it a source of usefulness and prosperity to the district and entitle it to be an esteemed friend and welcome guest at every fireside." (Johnston 1972)

When was the last time any of us thought of a newspaper as a friend or welcomed guest? Yet, it says volumes about the role of newspapers in a community during this period. It was not merely an instrument of information or a long list of headlines, but an intimate part of early life in British North America. Readers were to envision it as a companion to be invited in to their homes and take up one of the most preferred spots in the home – a place at the fireside. It is truly different from the cold, hard place it takes up on our mobile phones or computers. And, I don't think you would hear the CEOs of Sun Media or Transcontinental saying they would spare no "expense nor exertion" to create a newspaper today for a community like Cobourg.

Newspapers do more than disseminate information or try to sell us the latest product from a local retailer. A newspaper creates a space on its pages where opinions are expressed and debated. Its role facilitates the ability of people to engage in rational-critical discourse on political matters. Jurgen Habermas, in the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, argues the importance of newspapers in forming a place for public debate during the 17th century. But it is when the mass circulation press is created during the latter part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century where Habermas argues the political function of newspapers begins to diminish, turning it into a commercial enterprise focused on consumerism

rather than a forum for political debate. Over the 20th century and into our current times, the downward trend will continue. Political communication moves into a different sphere and the role of the press is altered, as it becomes less and less effective in contributing to public discourse and watching its role in public service fade to black.

During the formative period in the early to mid-19th century, newspapers are filled with partisan rhetoric and become carriers of news, as well as leaders of public opinion. During these early days, we can watch the columns in the newspapers transform into a space where private citizens could express themselves around the issues of the day. Through the deliberations found in editorials, letters and other contributions, citizens were able to form opinions. In this context, public opinion should not be understood in its modern usage within the economic model of democracy, but instead, from its classical perspective where individuals sought to inform themselves and engage in a form of discursive decision-making as exemplified in deliberative democratic practices.

The social and political structure of Upper Canada following the War of 1812 is often characterized as tyrannical and corrupt (McNairn 2000). Before this, settlers were more focused on clearing land and setting up viable farms. Life was about survival rather than politics (Dunham 1965). Still, the society was not completely bereft of political life. Two trends were at work during this period: one with its roots in Great Britain and the other based in the United States. British settlers were trying to hold on to the monarchy; its parliamentary traditions; and, the established Church of England as a dominant force in Upper Canada. Meanwhile, the American influence was based on the ideas of Andrew Jackson and democratic reform (Dunham 1965). The role of the press in this environment is crucial as it assists the early citizens of Upper Canada in mediating the tensions between these political trends. And, as more immigrants arrive from other places, newspapers aid those individuals in understanding the communities where they live – not only in comprehending the politics of the day, but also helping them fit into the social, cultural and economic life. This results in stronger ties between people who might initially not feel a part of the society at large.

Tonight, I wish to look at the contributions of three Cobourg newspapers in the formation of the community as a social, cultural, political and economic entity. I will examine the Cobourg Star (1831), the Cobourg Sentinel (1861) and the Cobourg World (1864). To focus this enormous task, I wish to look specifically at the editorials and letters during the first year of publication. These are the main forums where editors and the public were able to converse in a public forum. By exploring these three publications, it will allow us to study different time frames rather than one. This will, in turn, provide a snapshot of the evolution of public discourse and the roles newspaper play in the community.

The Cobourg Star's first year will give insight into the period prior to the Rebellion of 1837, a major political event in Upper Canada. It is a time when Reformers were gathering momentum and political tensions were high. It is also a time of local prosperity in Cobourg.

The Sentinel begins publishing just prior to the provincial election of 1861, again a time of great political discourse, but it is also shortly after the town suffers its greatest setback with the failure of a regional railway financed by the town.

The Cobourg World begins publishing in 1864 when the town is slowly beginning to make a comeback from its financial woes and plans for renewal are underway. It is also an election year and the local slate is hotly contested. So, there is plenty of rich material for people to debate.

As we have seen, Cobourg's political life was lively. Into this bustling hive of economic, political and social activity, Richard Dover (R.D.) Chatterton started publishing the Cobourg Star on January 11, 1831. It was a weekly newspaper in quarto form at the modest price of 12 shillings per annum. There is no clear record if this was the first newspaper in Cobourg. The records for this period are poor, but there is a reference to Mr. Radcliffe, father-in-law of Judge Boswell, who publishes a small weekly newspaper called the Reformer (McAllister 1903). And, Sammy Hart, who had a printing office just off the main street, published another publication called the Weevil. It was published until 1839. (McAllister 1903) (Guillet 1976) But it seems Chatterton's paper would survive the longest and continues to be published today. One of the earliest settlers in Cobourg, Chatterton came from England where he apprenticed in the publishing industry (McAllister 1903). He acquired the plant and rights of the Newcastle District Gazette, which he amalgamated under the name Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser.

The Cobourg Star focused on local affairs despite being delivered to agents in Belleville, Port Hope, Whitby, Colborne, Halldimand, Peterborough, Otonabee, Ancaster and Guelph. Of the 22 editorials written in the first year, 12 were of local interest, mainly provincial or Cobourg issues, while the remaining 10 were on foreign affairs. Chatterton appears to be obsessed with reform movements around the world as he writes repeatedly about revolutions in Great Britain, Poland and the United States. With the rise of the Reform movement in Upper Canada, he was obviously searching for parallels. Despite the geographic distance between Upper Canada and these countries, the editorials inferred a connection, although it was never directly argued. Clearly, he was concerned, mainly about the uncertain outcome and the challenges to established authority, but at no time did he openly say the same thing could happen with the Reform movement in Upper Canada.

Letters to the editor were not overly concerned with politics and rarely addressed local subjects. Again, the focus is the homeland. There were letters on editorials related to the British reform movement (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, May 3, 1831) or the state of the railway in Britain (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, March 29, 1831). There were a few on local subjects like the one on the vandalizing of Trent River Bridge (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, May 10, 1831) or the tirade against the idyll nature of people walking down the main street of Peterborough, since the author wanted to know why they were not working (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Oct. 11, 1831). There was also a letter praising the beauty of women in France Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Nov. 8 1831). Letters usually did not have proper names, as writers used pseudonyms such as "Concerned Citizen" or "British farmer" or "Trent Bridge".

Other letters took a more educational tone. Under the headline "Correspondence", the paper ran letters about cures for sand cracks (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Jan 25, 1831), flying squirrels (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, May 17, 1831), the American Lynx (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Dec. 31, 1831), the condition of roads (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Dec. 27, 1831) and a speech on the benefits of growing hemp (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, May 31, 1831).

While some of the authors used pen names like Atticus, many more gave full, proper names for this type of letter. This is not surprising considering the uncontentious nature of the subject matter.

Letters also took the form of informational items. Under the same headline of Correspondence, minutes of the Cobourg Harbour Commission appeared (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Feb. 8), a list of import and exports (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, March 22), militia training schedule and list of participants (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, June 14, 1831) and a review of a violin concert (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, June 14, 1831).

While these letters tended to be short in nature, usually around a couple hundred words, there were others that ran over several columns and even continued into the next edition. And rather than using a rhetorical form normally associated with letters to the editor, these long letters were more literary. In an eloquent description of trip to Mud Lake, north of Peterborough, Thomas Carr tells about the Scugag (sic) Indians and the work of the church in this Aboriginal community (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Feb. 15, 1831). He refers to concerns about the local natives, even though there are no news items describing a problem. Then, he goes on to give a detailed history of the First Nations people on Rice Lake. His journey continues up the Otonabee River to Peterborough. He stays overnight at Mud Lake and leaves to come home the next morning (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Feb. 22, 1831).

Two similar letters appear in October. The first is another piece of about the native people when they help on a hunting trip up the Otonabee River near T.C. Gilchrist's Mill. (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Oct. 18, 1831) and the other is a lengthy description of the interior of Newcastle District running over two issues (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, 1831).

But, it is a letter from John M. Flindall, from Murray Township, in the most eastern border of district, which provides a stirring account of his first night in Upper Canada. He describes his arrival in his new home 16 years ago. It is a beautiful description of intimate moments as he describes his wife and children sighing as they go to sleep and he is able to look up and see stars through the chinks between the logs in the roof. He listens to the bullfrogs and sees fireflies. (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Dec. 20, 1831)

The non-partisan nature of the editorials should not imply the content was not heated or there was a lack of debate. In the most intensive exchange during the first year of publication, Chatterton defends a local minister, Rev. A. N. Bethune, against an editorial appearing in the Christian Guardian, a Toronto-based newspaper published by the Methodist Church. Again, there is no detailed news report regarding the story and the editorial fails to give adequate background. However, Chatterton scolds the editor, Egerton Ryerson, for printing anything that would "question the character" of such a "fine man". (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, May 24, 1831). He calls on the sheriff to arrest Ryerson. Then, several weeks later, he demands a full retraction from the Guardian. (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, July 19, 1831)

The only other time Chatterton is this animated is when William Lyon Mackenzie is expelled from the local Assembly Hall in December 1831. In two flaming editorials, he calls on the

Attorney General Henry John Boulton to reinstate Mackenzie and allow him to speak. (Cobourg Star and Newcastle General Advertiser, Dec.13, 1831).

The notion of a newspaper as a forum for discursive democracy was not fully developed in the pages of the Cobourg Star. Only six letters were about issues, and only one focused on a local issue. Six other letters involved storytelling, while the remaining nine were educational.

This would completely change over the next three decades, as we shall see inside the pages of the first year of publication for the Cobourg Sentinel. Out of the 21 editorials written by publisher/editor Douglas McAllister, 13 would be local and eight would be about foreign news. Of these, seven were related to the American Civil War, which started only a few weeks before he began publishing on May 18. Like many other Upper Canadians, he worried about the war expanding north.

McAllister loved politics. The prospectus makes it clear the paper will maintain liberal, independent, with neutral content, encouraging a “freewheeling, temperate discussion of local matters” (Cobourg Sentinel May 18, 1861). The remainder promises to support local business and not wade into the controversial topic of religion, in an effort not to offend advertisers more than placating readers. The entire document is no more than 300 words long. But, in his inaugural editorial, he expands on the themes, repeating his commitment to neutrality and non-partisanship. Finally, he makes a commitment to integrity by saying: “Truth will always stand scrutiny, and by it we shall be ruled” (Cobourg Sentinel, May 18, 1861).

Neutrality should not be mistaken for a disinterest in politics. The paper was launched six weeks before the 1861 provincial election, which was being hotly contested. Letters arrive almost immediately. In one signed by Enquirer, it asks if the Cobourg Sentinel will be supporting George Brown, the leading reformer in Upper Canada (Cobourg Sentinel June 1, 1861). By the following issue, another writer, A. Subscriber, scolds McAllister for running the letter from the previous week. It accusing the publisher of taking side by merely publishing a letter deemed pro-Reform. McAllister defends himself in the editorial, repeating his pledge to be open to discussion. These related letters and editorial mark a significant difference between the 1831 Star and the Sentinel. Within a 30-year period, the newspaper becomes a forum for debate. This will be the first of many exchanges taking place. Another would happen in April 1862, when A. Ratepayer writes in to complain about the town spending \$244 on uniforms for firefighters. The author also blasts the town for even having a fire department, saying it should be up to the insurance companies to provide the service since they have a vested interest. By the next week, Firefighter H.J. Bradbeer writes a spirited response saying Mr. Ratepayer needs to rethink his position, since the municipal fire department does a good job and the cost for a uniform is negligible. Then, he challenges the author by asking why he felt it necessary to be anonymous. This level of accountability between citizens is the type of rational-critical discourse Habermas envisions within the public sphere.

But, there are other indications of a healthy deliberative democracy within the Sentinel. When the provincial elections draw nearer, the coverage intensifies. The nomination meetings are covered in-depth, along with nearly eight columns of speeches delivered by the two local candidates (Cobourg Sentinel, June 22, 1861). This is not the news coverage we might see today during an election. These are almost verbatim reports. There are also letters to the editor from both candidates detailing their respective positions on the issues. The paper endorses the Tory

candidate, something Chatterton would never do. Full details of the election results appear in the next issue (*Cobourg Sentinel*, June 29, 1861) with poll-by-poll results. James Cockburn, a local lawyer who declared himself an independent, won by 27 votes. Stinging from his poor call, McAllister makes sure there is good, supportive coverage of Cockburn's victory in the next edition, along with an editorial making peace with the winner (*Cobourg Sentinel*, July 6, 1861).

The editorials would be highly localized and more topical for readers. McAllister would criticize the things like representation by population; decry protesters in Belleville for burning the effigy of a politician; attack Cobourg municipal council for holding a budget meeting behind closed doors; and, chastise local politicians for the debt of council after the failed railway.

The letters to the editor also evolve as writers reach out to the community at large. Rather than telling stories or be educational, as was the practice in the earlier editions of the *Star*, the authors use the letters to speak to their fellow citizens. These are highly personalized messages where the author uses an actual name instead of a pseudonym. William Richardson, the captain of the *Garibaldi*, a ship involved in the rescue of a ship named the *Slug*, just off Cobourg harbour, writes in some detail about the event in a letter. He was quelling rumours about the response and defends his actions saying, "As for myself, I do not think there is a man in Cobourg who would charge me with not trying to save a fellow being if I had it in my power to do so" (*Cobourg Sentinel*, Aug 10, 1861). In a similar manner, there are two letters of thanks extended to the community, one from H. Stewart, thanking several students who helped the fire department put out a serious fire (*Cobourg Sentinel* Nov. 16, 1861); and, another from M. Timlin, treasurer of the Irish Relief Fund, thanking residents for their generous donations (*Cobourg Sentinel*, Feb. 22, 1862).

Still another use of letters, not found in the *Star*, was for advocacy. One calls for lighting along the main streets in the downtown signed by *More Light* (*Cobourg Sentinel*, Nov. 16, 1861). Two others challenged racist attitudes, defending Catholics against bitter Protestant attacks found in the *Globe* (*Cobourg Sentinel*, July 27, 1861). The other praises local Irish Catholics, in the face of comments heard around town (June 11, 1861). Finally, one author, called "O", demands to know why women are not allowed to vote for municipal councillors. Giving an account during the recent election, the author says a woman tried to vote for a councillor but was rejected (*Cobourg Sentinel*, Feb. 1, 1862). This is more than 16 years before the suffrage movement in Canada got its formal beginnings under Dr. Emily Howard Stowe in 1878.

Before going any further, it is important to realize there were a lot of newspapers starting and closing at this time. James McCarroll would resurrect the *Cobourg Reformer* in 1846, creating a newspaper that was clearly an organ of the Reform Party to replace the *Weevil*. A year later, Professor W. Kingston established the *Provincialist*, an independent journal about politics and religion. It folded within a year. In 1853, Anson N. Striker decided to move his printing office and paper, *The Picton Sun*, to Cobourg after being run out of town for his radical political writing. The *Cobourg Sun* was an organ of the Liberal Party, but was not very successful.

Thomas McNaughton purchased it from Striker, but struggled to keep it running until 1865. He tried to sell the newspaper to Henry Hough, but the deal went sour. Hough, who had studied at Victoria College in Cobourg, came from his hometown in Guelph to take over the operation. When he discovered McNaughton walked away from the deal, Hough decided to publish his own newspaper, the *Cobourg World*, a staunchly Reform newspaper with deep roots in Methodist values.

Three years after the *Sentinel* began, the *Cobourg World* is launched representing the most sophisticated and advanced newspaper in this study. It immediately establishes the paper's intent to be more didactic just from reading the headline and the deck: "Prospectus of a New Reform Family Journal: Devoted to The News, Politics, Science, Commerce, Agriculture, Education, Morality and General Literature" (*Cobourg Sentinel*, April 8).

The prospectus is just over 1,000 words (three times longer than the *Star* or the *Sentinel*), as Hough promises to create a good literary newspaper that will allow the "moderate expression of opinion" (*Cobourg Sentinel*, April 8, 1862). It reads like a political philosophy essay, boldly supporting the Reform Party yet vowing to transcend degrading name-calling. His strategy is to take positions that will "fully serve the Reform cause" and make a "strong impression upon our enemy" using fair and open discussion, hoping the sheer logic and righteousness of the rhetoric will win over Cobourg residents.

The political purpose of the newspaper is reinforced by its appearance one week before the nomination meeting for the 1864 provincial elections. The local Reformers are angry with Northumberland MPP James Cockburn because he recently supported Sir John A. Macdonald and his Militia Bill, which was considered by many to be far too expensive a response to a perceived threat of invasion by the Americans. The newspaper openly criticizes Cockburn and attacks him in an editorial (*Cobourg Sentinel*, April 19, 1862). There is even detailed coverage in a separate news story of a Reform meeting in Grafton where the motion to no longer support Cockburn is passed. In another story, an election debate is given expansive coverage over an entire five-column page of the newspaper with details including crowd reactions like "hear, hear" (*Cobourg Sentinel*, April 19, 1862). However, a week later, Hough is quick to smooth over relations with the incumbent after he was victorious by a whopping 416 votes (*Cobourg Sentinel*, April 22, 1862). A week goes by without an editorial, although there is more election coverage with a list of all the ridings and the winners. The election coverage demonstrates how the newspaper content changes from the previous two newspapers with its more extensive news coverage (despite its partisanship) and editorializing.

In an ironic twist, *The World* is far more local in its editorials and letters than the other two papers. Of the 16 editorials run over the first year, only two are about foreign topics. What is also markedly different is the interaction between editorials and letters. Unlike the other two papers, *The World* creates dialectic between itself and the audience, particularly on two topics: the future of the railroad and temperance. Notably, the first is political and the second a moral question.

By the time *The World* begins publishing, the railroad from Cobourg to Peterborough stopped running. Local politicians are unsuccessfully battling with the province to forgive the loans. The town is suffering economically and people are leaving (Guillet 1948). Hough worries in an editorial about the economic future, calling on political leaders to come up with a plan (*Cobourg World*, June 10, 1864). In a bold editorial, he outlines a detailed proposal arguing the need for a new "public enterprise". He calls for a rail line from Cobourg to the Marmora Iron mine, north of Belleville, using the existing rails to Rice Lake and a steamer to carry the ore across the lake from the northeast corner (*Cobourg World*, May 13, 1864). A second editorial appears the week after; pushing his proposal, saying Cobourg could be the "Athens of Canada" (*Cobourg World*, May 20, 1864). This is followed by a spirited reply to an editorial in the *Sentinel*, which attacked the *World*'s proposal. In the *Sentinel*, McAllister accuses Hough of hurting the reputation of the

town by writing about the poor local economy and the subsequent need for a new plan like the revitalized railway (*Cobourg World*, May 20, 1864). Hough responds bluntly saying the Sun also drew attention to the same poor financial picture without any scorn from the Sentinel.

Obviously, there is some spirited competition going on. But what is more significant is now two papers are debating each other. The public sphere is alive, well and thriving.

Then, in the fall, a series of letters from various authors beginning in October. Each one complains about the lack of action regarding the railroad, including suggestion to use the abandoned line for some purpose (*Cobourg World*, Oct 7, 1864). Another accuses one of the board members of being corrupt (*Cobourg World*, Oct. 21, 1864). Yet another warns against any plans to try and build another bridge across the lake (*Cobourg World*, Nov. 18, 1864). In total, five of the 22 letters received by the World that year address the railroad. Hough becomes inspired by the letters; and in an editorial, he reiterates his calls for the Marmora project (*Cobourg World*, Nov. 8, 1864). Yet another letter to be written in January, which is followed by another editorial demanding action. Hough calls on the railroad company to hold a public board meeting to deal with the issue, including the appointment of an oversight committee (*Cobourg World*, Feb. 10, 1865). The next week a story appears with the motion creating a special committee.

The temperance issue is very similar. Early in 1865, the province introduces a motion for a temperance bill, giving powers to the municipalities to decide if they will allow liquor sales. This causes a series of public meetings, led by municipal politicians, to decide what to do.

Temperance was a central issue for the community. In one letters, the author asks a series of questions about the legality of a tavern in Cold Spring, north of Cobourg, selling liquor. (*Cobourg World*, Aug 19, 1864). The World takes up the cause on all levels with a series of stories about ratepayer meetings and temperance society meetings in Cobourg, Hamilton and Haldimand townships over January and February. Five letters will be published during this time, along with a lengthy editorial stretching over three columns. (*Cobourg World*, Jan 20, 1865).

This type of integrated discourse between the editor and the audience (and in some cases between the various newspapers) is played out. Editorials and then letters follow news stories in terms of coverage of the temperance debates. Certainly, these are all pro-temperance, as it would be expected from the moral tone of the paper. But it is the varied content that aims to inform, as well as comment, that makes this stand out.

It is very easy to see the evolution of a public sphere within these three newspapers. These are places where open discussions about important issues to the community are aired. The Cobourg Star is a place where all eyes are cast back to the motherland. News and opinion are barely separated. Everyday people, not a staff person, write the educational letters and travelogues. Discursive democracy was not fully developed in its pages. This is not the true public sphere, so what is happening that makes the Cobourg Star significant in the development of community.

For this we can turn to Benedict Anderson's ideas surrounding the development of nationalism in his book *Imagined Communities*. Here he says people rarely know fellow members of their country, meet them or hear of them, yet in the minds of each individual there is a shared image of their communion (Anderson 1991). One of the key ways we create these shared images is through language, as communicated via a common literature. In this case, it would be the language of news. Just think, when we all sit down to read a newspaper, it is an act of

simultaneous consumption. We know that that particular edition is being overwhelmingly consumed between this hour and that, only on this day, not that day. There are people at home, in offices, at work doing the same act. It is something that is happening elsewhere and we have a sense of this. Yet, we may not know that individual precisely, we have an image of someone else doing it. We can "imagine" ourselves being part of a larger community.

It makes sense to extend this to early Cobourg. Here are these subscribers sitting by their fireplaces, reading the weekly *Star*. The same thing is going on at other homes across Newcastle District and beyond. They are reading the same stories, sharing the same ideas. Together they are learning about flying squirrels. But, they are also sharing experiences, like the trip to Lake Mud or the farmer from Murray Township recounting those first days living in his new home in Upper Canada. That description is so beautiful, even we can close our eyes and see what he saw.

It only makes sense to think that these shared experiences through the pages of the newspapers gave members of the community a sense of others they would never meet. It also rightly assumes a set of common values. Without knowing each other, these people are forming the basis of a community. And, if Anderson is correct, then here is where the seeds of nationalism are spread.

The results are seen a mere 30 years later when the *Sentinel* starts publishing. Suddenly, the *Prospectus* is very different and the editorial pages are filled with fewer letters interested in Britain and more about what is going on down the street. The authors discuss the politics of the day. And, McAllister defends his editorials from accusations of partisanship. Citizens use the pages to complain about municipal spending, while others defend the council. It is public debate in all its glory. Still, even with promises of neutrality, McAllister publishes an endorsement of the Tory candidate, then quickly retreats once Cockburn wins. This demonstrates the tough balance for a local newspaper when you live in the community. You can't hide, but you can change your mind.

The *Sentinel* is more typical of the American partisan press during this time period. During the American Civil War, newspaper played a vital role in advocating social change and taking very strenuous political positions based on ideologies. In many cases, it was the newspaper publishers, who were the first political organizers, since many fledgling political parties were unable to reach a mass audience to communicate their positions and policies. (Nerone 1998)

This is amply demonstrated in the Cobourg World, where there is a more fierce partisanship, both because he clearly defines himself as a servant of the Reform Party in his *Prospectus* and his pledges to support Methodist morals. In its pages, Cockburn is hammered on crossing the floor to support Sir. John A. Macdonald's Tories. As said before, the news coverage is far more extensive with its multiple pages devoted to a single meeting in Grafton. The notion of a news story being equally important, if not more important, than just editorializing.

But, it must be the debates over the future of the railway and the vision for Cobourg's future that give the clearest picture of a vibrant public sphere existing in the pages of a local newspaper. The back and forth over proposals made within the columns of the *World* demonstrate how citizens view the role of news media as a vehicle for building consensus. Also note, these are people with a strong sense of their community, who want to shape its destiny.

The seeds of nationalism are growing and quickly moving towards full bloom in 1867. The World is publishing at the same time discussions around confederation are advancing.

Tonight, I have tried to provide a glimpse into these newspapers, this community and its social, cultural, political and economic life. Following the progress of a single paper may provide an insight into singular vision of one publisher. By comparing three newspapers, it gives the clearest picture of the relationship between the various media, the evolution of public debate and the role played in forming the community, possibly the nation.

By mapping the changes, it juxtaposes the relationships between the visions of Anderson and Habermas. There are few studies that follow the formation of a public sphere; yet, the evidence shows the role of the early newspapers in Cobourg suggest this emergence takes place on the pages of the local newspaper as we witness the newly settled community of individuals gain a sense of each other through imagined communities and then move forward to deliberate over its future. It is a pattern worth exploring further.

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Writing a local history

Ian Montagnes

The first time I visited Cobourg was about 30 years ago. Then, as now, it was to give a talk about history. My subject was Taddle Creek, a stream that once flowed through central Toronto but had been buried for most of a century. I had built an illustrated talk about a watercourse that could no longer be seen, and for a few years it enjoyed a certain popularity among the historically minded.

At the end of the talk I was given as a souvenir this little book, a history of Port Hope. It had originally been published in 1901 and had been recently reprinted. It had an old-fashioned flavour and I kept it, primarily as a curiosity, as my life changed in address, marriage, and careers. Only when we moved to Port Hope did it take on new significance. It was still the only general history of Port Hope. Even then it did not occur to me that I might write its successor.

That talk in Cobourg, when I was given the book, most likely took place between 1976 and 1978. If you had asked me a few weeks ago who had invited me and where it was held, I would have said it took place in Victoria Hall and was sponsored by the Cobourg and District Historical Society. My memory was clear. But, while preparing for tonight, I discovered that this Society did not exist in those years, and there is some doubt whether the talk would have been held in this building during its decade of restoration. I now have no idea who actually invited me.

This rambling introduction thus is a cautionary tale. Serendipity can occur in writing history, but so can mishaps. Memory is an unreliable source. Documents are safer.

That is why, in writing my own little history, I spent relatively little time interviewing people and more hours than I care to remember scrolling through fuzzy microfilm copies, with the attendant curses of eyestrain and nausea. Most particularly I worked in the Port Hope Public Library, mining its microfilms of Port Hope newspapers from their beginnings in the mid-19th century.

This kind of archival research becomes a mind-numbing visual drone after an hour or two, were it not for the occasional item that sings.

I will never forget the glee with which I discovered, in the Ontario Archives, in the handwritten minute book of Port Hope's early municipal government, that the town's first election for council was riddled with fraud. One prominent businessman had garnered more votes than there were eligible electors. He was never unseated.

Then there was the report of a near-riot in 1879. The police were trying to ban a burlesque troupe from performing in the old Opera House, which was located above what now is the Royal Bank. A crowd of anxious would-be viewers protested. The girls finally did show their legs.

At another point in the microfilm I silently applauded an impatient mayor, who found a way to end an interminable argument in the town council about spending \$300. He announced he would pay for the item out of his own pocket. Would that more such discussion could be brought so quickly to a close!

Three items in the Guide that caught my eye were spaced over several months in 1872. In the spring of that year the provincial school inspector visited the town. The newspaper carried a comprehensive report on his findings. In it, he made special mention of a Miss Florence Ashford, who was teaching Grades 1 and 2 in the central school. Her classroom was located

over a fire hall at the foot of Walton Street. About 100 restless children were crowded together on backless benches, the lesson interrupted by noise and dust from the main street. Despite these difficulties, the inspector commended Miss Ashford for her success in teaching and keeping order. However, he added, “one thing is certain; she cannot continue to do this amount of work very long without injuring her health.” That was in April. When school resumed the next September, the Guide carried a three-line item that Miss Ashford was too ill to return to work. In mid-October it announced her death. She had graduated from the local high school only a year before. She was eighteen years old. She had never been strong. Such was education and women’s health in the high Victorian age.

Quite late in my research came the discovery that the so-called hero of Batoche, the man whose gallant statue stands outside Port Hope’s town hall, the man who led the charge that ended the Riel Rebellion in 1885, was possibly not so much a hero after all. But to learn that story you will have to read the book ...

After the research, of course, came the writing. All I shall say about it is that writing is hard work. I have been writing for publication most of my life, and it never gets easier. Quite the opposite, in fact. The only pleasure comes in those rare moments when the words arrange themselves exactly as you had imagined.

I would like to spend a few minutes instead talking about the act of planning before writing begins. Many local histories could more properly be described as collections of facts, ordered simply by subject and date. And much important information has been preserved in this way. One of the great practitioners of the approach was E.C. Guillet, who was closely connected with Cobourg, and with whom I worked in his later years. Clare Guillet was a prolific author. One day a contemporary of mine at university asked him, “Mr Guillet, how do you write your books?” “Well, June,” he replied, “I just lay my notes out on the kitchen table and paste them together.”

By these methods, Mr Guillet uncovered and preserved a vast treasure of information about the early decades of our region and province, for which we should all be grateful. But the writing of history has moved on to a more nuanced and analytical approach.

I am a popular, not an academic, historian, but I believe that popular history – that written for a general audience rather than for specialists – benefits from the disciplines of the professional. So, before writing a word of manuscript, I followed advice I have given to scores of authors and young editors. It is to begin by asking six questions. They are what Rudyard Kipling called his six honest serving men who taught him all he knew. They are: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

What? should be easy. In fact, many authors find it surprisingly difficult to say what their book is about in a single sentence, at least not without the help of several subordinate clauses and semi-colons. In my case, it was “I am going to write a history of Port Hope that will appeal to a general public.”

When? and Where? were also easy. The book would range from prehistory to the present but, as the plan developed, with special attention to the Victorian years. It would concentrate on what was then the Town of Port Hope. I did not change that focus after the town amalgamated in 2000 with Hope Township. My research was well under way by that time and the rural township was already well served with histories.

Who would I write for, besides the generic but hard-to-define “general public”? Obviously, residents of Port Hope, but they were not famous for book buying. The book would have to

appeal to former residents, to others living away who still had family connections to Port Hope, and to the tourists who are attracted by Port Hope's heritage buildings. Perhaps the town and some institutions might be willing to buy copies, to give away as public service. Reaching so diverse a group would not be easy. Clearly, marketing was going to play an important part in making a successful publication.

Then came How? How would I tell the stories of two centuries? Not, I was determined, by a collection of events in chronological order. So I asked a secondary question: What is distinctive about Port Hope? There is what we have come to call the nuclear stigma, but it was not so pronounced a dozen years ago.

One thing that distinguishes Port Hope from most other Ontario small towns is that the past is still so present. You can't miss the buildings that went up in the 19th century. Most are still standing, and most have been restored or renovated. Would it be possible, I wondered, to build a book around that fact – to plan so that each chapter opened with a modern full-colour photograph of a structure or landscape that could be seen today, and follow that with text related to the history the photo represents and with related illustrations from the past. A chapter on municipal government, for example, might open with a recent photo of the town hall. It was a plan I had never seen before in local history. Trying something novel made the project much more appealing.

So did John deVisser's immediate agreement to produce the modern photos, which guaranteed the success of that part of the project. The next question was whether there would be enough historical illustrations to complement what we can see today. Searches in local, provincial, and federal archives proved there would be.

Then came more questions, arising from a background in economic history. How was it, I asked, that all the impressive homes on Dorset and King Street got built – not to speak of the commercial buildings on the main street and the host of Ontario cottages elsewhere? What was the source of the town's past wealth? What happened to that wealth? How did the people in those houses live? And what in the 1980s prompted the movement for architectural conservation?

How to tackle the book was answered. It would be predominantly an economic and social history focusing on the golden age of Port Hope's prosperity. That left only Why I was prepared to invest the time and effort required.

Initially, the answer was simple. I was three-quarters retired, and I wanted something to keep me busy. I have been writing for publication most of my life and, despite constant complaints, I am rarely happy if I don't have one or two manuscripts on the go. This seemed an obvious next venture.

I also saw it as a way to return something to a town that had welcomed us when we moved from Toronto. Port Hope had been too long without a history of its own.

As I began working in the library I found a new motivation – the sight of youngsters trying to complete school projects about their community without adequate resources. They deserved better.

Underlying these reasons was something of which I was only dimly, if at all, aware. It was the desire to understand more fully the community of which I had become a member – to understand its roots that were not my own. This is what impels all of us who read or write

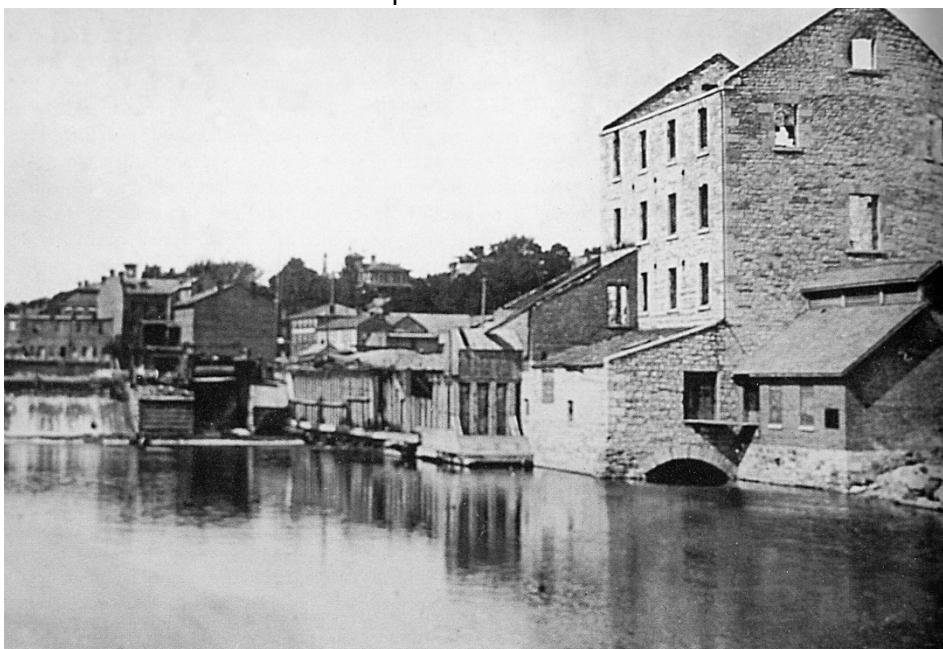
history: to seek a pattern in our surroundings, whether those surroundings are defined as a small town or a nation, a gender or a class, or by any other of the many possible criteria.

The wonderful Canadian historian Margaret MacMillan has written a little book called *The uses and abuses of history*. In it she says: "You feel your life has a meaning if you are part of a much larger group, which predated your existence and which will survive you (carrying, however, some of your essence into the future)." She went on to say that history is also comforting: it "can offer simplicity when the present seems bewildering and chaotic."

Of course, in simplifying we make decisions about what will be included and what will be left out. The pattern-maker shapes the pattern, much as a painter records his personal view of a landscape. History is subjective. That is why my book is sub-titled *A history*. It is only one of many that could be written.

In finding patterns, we may also find answers to things that puzzle or trouble us in the present – or if not answers, at least a better understanding of them. As an example, I would like to explore briefly a subject I was advised to avoid, and that is the rivalry between Port Hope and Cobourg. Today it may seem petty and annoying. For most of a century, however, it was a bitter struggle for growth and prosperity. The outcome was determined, as to some extent it still is, by a force that neither town could control: geography.

To begin at the beginning: In the summer of 1791, a Loyalist entrepreneur named Elias Smith and a ship's captain named Jonathan Walton explored the northern shore of Lake Ontario looking for a suitable place to start a settlement. They passed by what we now call Cobourg Creek and, from among many other potential sites, they chose what would become Port Hope. In the following year, with a third partner, they obtained a land grant and promised to settle it. The prize that had grabbed



their attention was the horsepower generated by the

Mill on Ganaraska River
Photo from Long Family Collection

Ganaraska River. Port Hope's harbour then was practically non-existent, blocked by a huge sandbank. But the river, they recognized, was a powerful source of energy when all other power had to be generated by muscle. On it they built a mill, the only one in those years between York (now Toronto) and Meyer's Creek (now Trenton). The mill was essential for pioneer families with grain to turn into flour, and they made their way to it from as far as Peterborough.

The prosperity of the Ganaraska mill attracted other settlers – not just farmers but also blacksmiths, tanners, a distillery, and even a pioneer lawyer. Before long there was a thriving small town on the riverbank. In neighbouring Cobourg, such relatively concentrated settlement did not begin until later, and there was no large flour mill to attract farmers until 1817. Port Hope had a good head start.

From there, in the time available, I can only sketch the story. And it will sometimes be from Port Hope's perspective, because I do not have comparable data for Cobourg.

Both towns developed their harbours. Cobourg's was on a broad reach. Port Hope's was sheltered between low hills. In bad weather, Port Hope was a harbour of refuge; Cobourg's could never be one.

Both harbours, however, could serve the export trade in timber from Peterborough County. For many years, lumber and shingles manufactured in that area were floated down the Otonabee River to Rice Lake. There the owners had to choose how to reach Lake Ontario. They could land their cargo at Gore's Landing and go overland to Cobourg, or they could float it a little further west to Bewdley and a road that led to Port Hope. Because of a dip in the moraine, the western road was much less hilly than the one to Cobourg. That gave Port Hope a decided advantage when heavy wagons had to be hauled by horse or oxen.

Then in the 1850s came the railway, replacing animal muscle power with steam. Both towns sought to capitalize on the new technology. Each hoped the rails would secure for it the trade in timber and exports from the growing agricultural communities to the north.

Cobourg was first off the mark with a line to Peterborough. But its fate is well known. The builders decided to cross, rather than go around, Rice Lake. The three-mile wooden bridge failed under ice pressure and the enterprise foundered.

Port Hope was slower to start but had a direct and relatively easy route up the Ganaraska valley and beyond. The line reached Lindsay first, to capture the output of sawmills at Fenelon Falls, then built a branch to Peterborough. The effect on the town was immediate. As the first rails were being laid, a new suburb sprang up on the western outskirts – scores of Ontario Cottages in a year. Closer to the river, the wooden shops were replaced by three- and four-storey brick commercial blocks. By 1860, Port Hope was one of only four towns along the north shore of Lake Ontario that had more than 5,000 inhabitants. The others were Toronto, Kingston, and Belleville.

Eventually, the railway that started in Port Hope extended all the way to Georgian Bay, to tap the farms and timber of Ontario's heartland. It is hard to imagine the amount of trade that funneled through Port Hope's harbour during those years. In 1879 alone, 50 million board feet of lumber passed through the port. How much wood is that? In volume, it is almost three times the amount of concrete used to build the CN Tower in Toronto. And in the following year, timber exports through Port Hope increased still further, by more than a third.

Nor should one forget the tons of barley, wheat, rye, peas, and manufactured goods that also passed through the port. For a couple of decades, Port Hope was living high off the hog. Cobourg, I would guess, must have looked on with envy.

And then of course, everything changed. As land upstream was cleared for farming, the Ganaraska's horsepower dwindled and grew uncertain. Steam, and then electric, power took over, even alongside the river. Port Hope lost its natural advantage. It also suffered under other changes that affected all the small towns along the Lake Ontario front. They lost jobs as the new types of power freed industry to concentrate in cities like Toronto. Their retailers lost business as Eaton's mail order catalogue reached into rural homes. New industries rose but too often



Industrial Area, Harbour and Railway Viaduct

Photo from Long Family Collection

disappeared: some that succeeded moved to Toronto; others failed. The gasoline engine, the motor car, and eventually the long-distance truck reduced the importance of steamships, ports, and railways. Both Cobourg and Port Hope became little more than stops on Highway 2 between Toronto and Montreal. With the creation of Highway 401, to most of the world they dwindled to names on traffic signs. Port Hope at least had the singular advantage of being coupled on signs with a hamlet called Welcome.

During this period of great change, I sense, Cobourg proved itself more politically adept and aligned with power than Port Hope. More recently it has turned its open harbour – once a liability, no refuge in times of storm – into a peaceful asset. The broad lakeshore became an attractive beach; its level borders welcomed development of a condo community for the empty nesters of the metropolis.

Port Hope now was the one looking on as its rival grew. It had its attractive 19th century buildings and river, but its harbour was constricted, its lakeshore cut off from the town by railway viaducts, its riverside declared a floodplain. Its central lakeshore was dominated by an industry that has left a legacy of low-level contamination – one that has been blown out of all proportion in the public eye by sporadic bursts of media sensationalism and attention-seeking. The low-level waste will be cleaned up but the nuclear stigma remains, an unfounded impediment to attracting new residents. Is it any wonder, then, that some in Port Hope may be skeptical about proffered embraces from its long-time rival?

The values of the two towns differ. Port Hope has long enjoyed a reputation for eccentricity. Some residents call it “five square miles surrounded by sanity.” Cobourg has its own eccentrics

undoubtedly, but seems more oriented towards what we might call progress. Any amalgamation of the two seems unlikely. But increased cooperation between them does appear to many of us as desirable as it is inevitable.

Their troubled relationship, like most such, might be easier if its history were better understood.

But we must recognize that recalcitrance has not been on one side only. So here is one more lesson from history. John Helm was one of Port Hope's greatest 19th century industrialists, owner of a large foundry on the river bank. When he died in 1912, aged ninety-four, he left to the county the land surrounding his home plus \$100,000 – the equivalent of nearly \$2,000,000 today – to build a large modern hospital. At the time, the district had only a few small hospitals located in private homes. Helm's plan was never adopted. Several parts of the county, including Cobourg, rejected the idea of cooperation. As a result the county lost both the land, which remained with Helm's family, and 60 per cent of the cash, which went to hospitals outside the area. What was left was divided between Port Hope and Cobourg to build small hospitals of their own. It took most of a century before Helm's ambitious hope for a regional hospital was realized.

We should know our history, it is often said, to learn from it and avoid its mistakes. But I think that Margaret MacMillan enunciated a more fundamental reason for writing and reading history. To quote that same passage again: "You feel your life has a meaning if you are part of a much larger group, which predated your existence and which will survive you (carrying, however, some of your essence into the future)." This reason, I would suggest, carries with it a responsibility to the future – to ensure that the history of your own small segment of the group to which you belong does survive into the future. That means writing your own history.

Present students of the past can draw on a mass of correspondence, diaries, detailed newspaper reports, and memoirs that have been preserved on paper. What will the historians of the next century find about our time?

There may still be mountains of paper from governments and corporations, and Everests of data on every conceivable subject. But where will they find the flesh and blood to give life to the bureaucratic bafflegab and the dry statistical digits? How will they learn about the everyday lives of ordinary people? We are an e-mail generation: few of us still write letters on a medium that has physical substance. Our newspapers eschew the ordinary life because it does not sell copies. Our television misrepresents our existence in what are laughingly called reality shows.

It is up to us to write the history of our personal locality. It need not be about a town. It may be about families, immediate and extended, or about our own growing up and the influences that shaped our adult life. It could be about something as small as the smell of rubber treads on cellar stairs – a memory Margaret Atwood called up for me in her novel *Cat's Eye* – or about the lost pleasures of building model planes out of balsa wood, another memory I recall every time I smell nail polish, for the glue we used then had the same base.

So I close with a plea – that you write down your memories. I persuaded my father to do so, and I will always be grateful that he did. I am doing the same for my children.

You owe it to your children and your grandchildren, so that they will know your part of the larger group of which they too form a part. Your memoirs need not be literary works of art, but it is important that they exist. And that you make enough copies, and deposit at least one in your Society's archives.

What's Brewing at the Barracks?

Catherine Milne

Most of us are familiar with the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre, aka “the barracks”, located on lot 18, concession B, at the corner of Orr and Durham Streets.

The limestone building had become derelict over the years and has been in the process of restoration since 1999. There are plans to turn this mysterious and fascinating structure into a museum and they are gradually coming into fruition..



Here is how the building looked before the Museum Foundation took it over.



After much hard work and fund-raising this is how it appears today.
(museum's promotional literature.)

For years the origin of the building has been the source of much speculation. It has been very difficult to sort out fact from fiction. A great deal has been written based on supposition and wishful thinking and is not backed by research.

Along with many others, I have never believed that the limestone building dated back to the War of 1812.



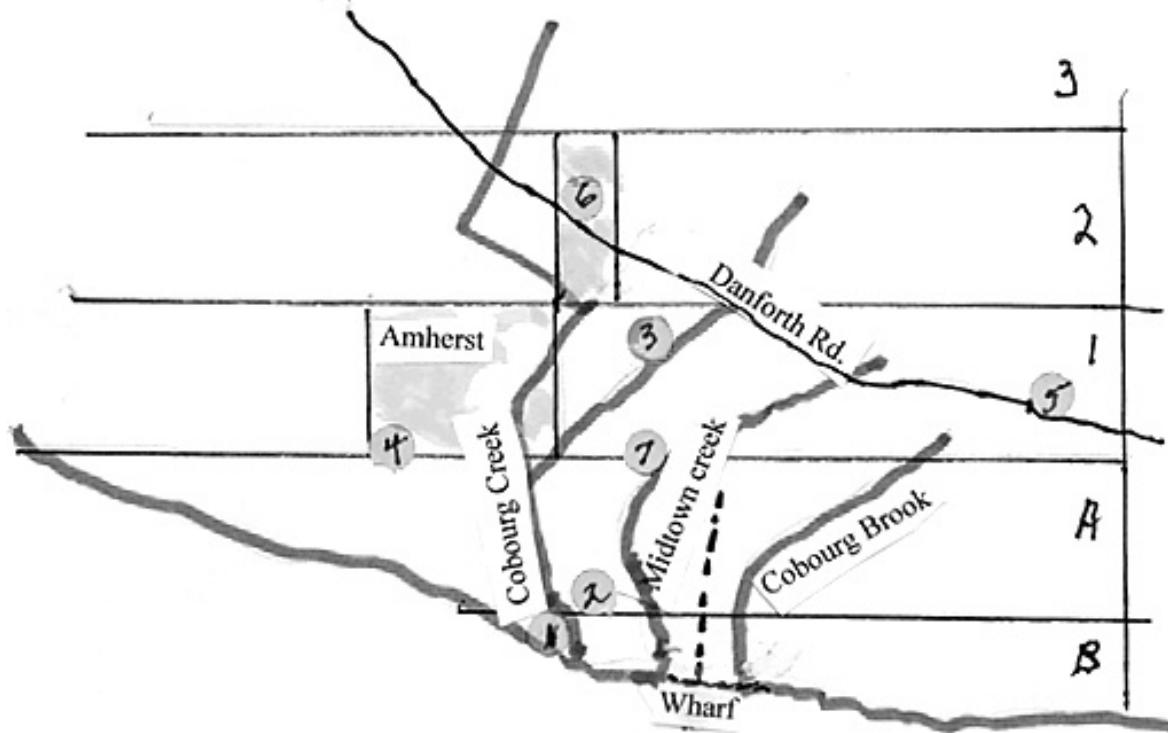
Let me take you back to the days before settlement when this country was covered in forest and this very spot where we are now sitting was a cedar swamp...

Rather than landing canoeists might paddle up one of the creeks to drier ground. It was said Midtown Creek in the middle of Cobourg was much larger then and you could paddle up as far as present James Street.

But by the late 1700s change was coming to that quiet shore and its

peace would be shattered forevermore.

To the south the American Revolution was over. But those remaining loyal to Britain were being persecuted and many sought sanctuary in Canada. At first they tended to locate in the eastern provinces but settlement was slowly trickling westward.



In Upper Canada Lieut-Gov. John Graves Simcoe offered 200 acres to those who would swear a loyalty oath and perform settlement duties. After 1796, when surveys were completed in the townships, a wave of land-hungry settlers began to flood in. In Hamilton Township at first they avoided the low swampy area around the bay and settled on higher ground on the outskirts.

A number of them chose the north-western area they called Amherst - for the first Governor-General of Canada, Lord Amherst.

Hamilton Township c. 1812 (Map opposite page)

1. Asa Burnham's sawmill, Factory Creek 1801
2. Elias Jones Store, King Street 1802
3. Josiah White's grist mill 1811,
Bates and Mark Burnham's store, upper Factory Creek
4. Zaccheus Burnham tavern, Amherst 1806
5. Maj. D.M. Roger's farm, east Danforth Rd. Halfway House
6. Niram Burnham's farm c. 1811, Ontario and Danforth Rds.
7. James Williams tavern, 1812

Note that the township is divided into concessions and lots, each of which is 200 acres in area, 1 and 1/4 mile deep and 1/4 of a mile wide- Except for concession B, called the broken front. Asa Burnham's sawmill in 1801 at the mouth of Factory Creek, Elias Jones' store in 1802 on a trail that was said to be a founderous morass, the forerunner of King St, Zaccheus Burnham's tavern in Amherst area 1806, White's grist mill and Mark Burnham's storehouse on upper Factory Creek c. 1811.

The Burnham brothers were among the first settlers. They were UEL's who came from New Hampshire c. 1798, and still have descendants in the area today.

Here is Asa Burnham, the patriarch of the present Burnham family, an early mayor. with a typical pioneer sawmill (*not shown*)

This is the first official map of the Cobourg area dated 1811 (*not shown*) showing lots and first land grants. Clergy reserve (St Peter's) Ashes, Nickersons, Jones and other early Cobourg names.

Note the vacant lot 18- the site of the later brewery - Actually it was not vacant, Nathan Williams and his five sons applied for a patent on lot 18 and were clearing land there in 1804.

There is no evidence Williams was an United Empire Loyalist or a military man. Ordinary settlers had to pay patent and surveys fees and were required to perform settlement duties before their grants were approved. These involved building a log cabin, cutting down enough trees to make five large brush heaps and paying twenty-five dollars for the deed. The settler had to swear before a magistrate that these had been done before a grant was approved. Because of the many applications grant approval was often delayed for many years. Williams waited nearly 20 years to get his grant approved.

In her reminiscences Katherine (Chrysler) White says she saw only three houses when she landed at the small wharf in 1813 and only a rough corduroy road to the lake. (probably on lot 17, later to become Division St.) Roads were usually located on lot or concession lines.

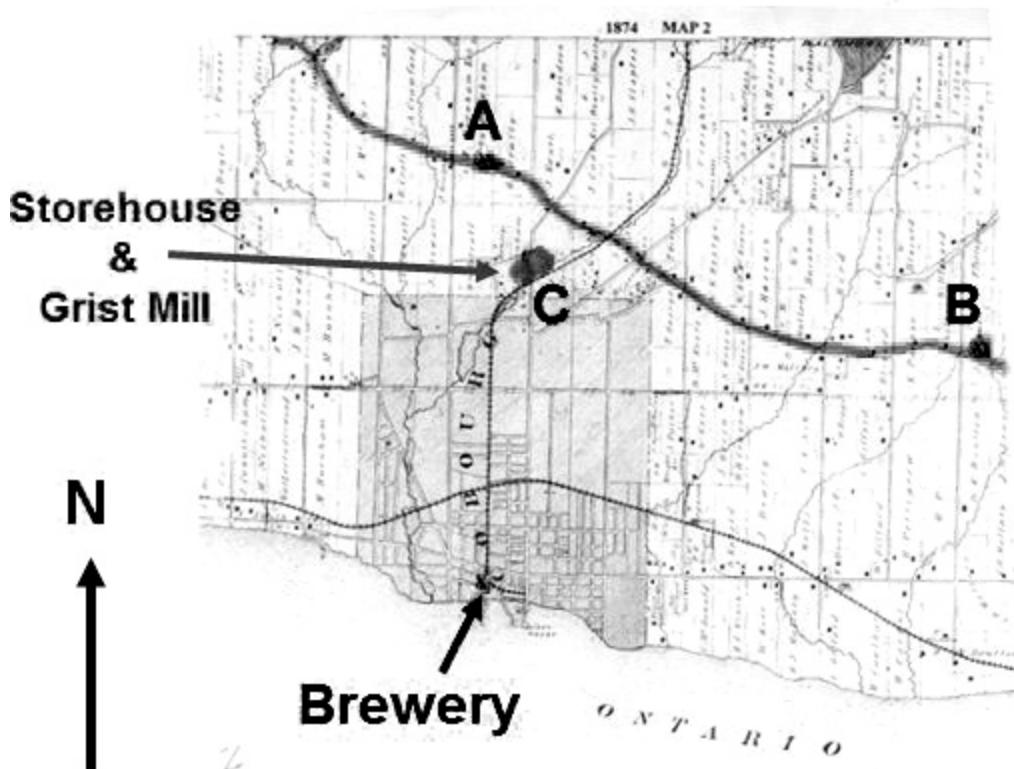
Katherine Chrysler had come to Hamilton Township as the bride of Josiah Charles White, another of the first grantees of land in the area, who had established a mill on the upper reaches of Factory Creek.

While travelling north through Hamilton Township, Catharine Parr Trail, in her own inimitable style, wrote, "Here the bold forests of oak, beech, maple and basswood, with now and then a grove of dark pines, only enlivened by an occasional settlement with its log-house and jig-jag fences of split timber."

But by 1811 the settlers' peaceful hard-working lives were once more being disturbed by rumblings of war to the south. About half the 40 residents of the township promptly registered for military duty.

There were no military engagements in Hamilton Township and the Americans failed in every attempt to invade Canada. It is improbable that there was any military building in existence on lot 18 in Hamilton twp. because the land along the lakeshore was still a swampy wilderness. Any land movement during the War of 1812 was to the north along the Danforth road constructed in 1800 through the Township. Highway Two was not built until 1817.

Hamilton Township Map 1874



This is a later map of Hamilton Township showing the Danforth Rd built in 1800 north of the lakeshore. It was said to be in poor shape but passable. Here (X) is the location where the brewery would be built and the two farms on the Danforth where the troops were quartered (A & B).

Zaccheus and Asa Burnham were acquiring extensive properties in both concessions One and Two in the Amherst area by 1801. Zaccheus built a distillery and inn there that he operated until

the war began. He was appointed officer in charge of transportation during the War of 1812-14. Edwin Guillet wrote in *The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman*, "Mr. Burnham's farm was the only one along the road where supplies could be obtained and the troops of the line quartered there".

Niram Burnham, a relative of Zaccheus, occupied the farm owned by Zaccheus on Lot 18, Concession Two. This farm was located on the Danforth Road near Ontario Street. A broken tombstone was ploughed up in a field on the property saying "In memory of two infant sons of Niram and Mary Burnham who died 1812".

Niram Burnham's house- The oldest part is here. The addition was later moved to the site.



There is a tradition that Halfway House, further along on the Danforth Road, at lot 4, was used by General Sheaffe and the British Army after the burning of York in 1813.



Halfway house built by Maj. David Rogers

These are two of oldest houses in Hamilton Township. They are both designated as historic homes and have the original fireplaces and bake ovens. Lee Beech, the present owner, can show you the room the general supposedly occupied.

Fort York, Toronto, was sacked twice and some public buildings burned in retaliation for the burning of Washington D.C. by the British. "The Star Spangled Banner" was written during this period. This is the closest any military action ever came to Hamilton township.

No record has been found of any military building on the swampy lakeshore. There is a letter in existence at the Ottawa Archives dated 11th of September, 1814, written from Cramahe (Township) by Lt. Col. John Peters, the Commanding Officer of the 1st Regiment Northumberland Militia stating in part "the stationing of a Sergeant and twelve men at John's Creek, Hamilton as there is a quantity of flour at the Mill and a Depot of provisions near for the servicing of the troops". It is speculated that John's Creek (perhaps a misspelling of the name of Elias Jones who owned large tracts of land on both sides of the creek), is Cobourg Brook but there is nothing to say the men were stationed at the mouth. * aka Factory Creek, Cobourg Creek. More likely they would be located in the Amherst area near the supplies.

Josiah White was the earliest miller in the area and he built his grist mill c. 1811 further up Cobourg Creek. Zaccheus Burnham of neighbouring Amherst was involved with supplies for the troops so it is most likely that White's Mill is the one in question. Today White St. , south of 401, commemorates the family. Mark Burnham's storehouse was also nearby.

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The nearest military post was at Carrying Place near Belleville.

There are a number of letters concerning the War of 1812-14 on file at the Ottawa Archives and officers often mentioned connected with Hamilton Township were: Captain Zaccheus Burnham, Major Elias Jones and Major David Rogers, who owned Halfway House on the Danforth Road. (7 on 1812 Hamilton Township map above) *The inn where the troops had meals was that of James Williams, located at present Elgin and Division Streets.* It appears that any military encampments would be near the Amherst area and further north on the Danforth. Researchers should remember that the town of Cobourg did not exist during the War of 1812 and it is a disservice to other researchers to use the name in connection with the war. Letters concerning military matters to and from the area were simply addressed "Hamilton or Cramahe".

Methodist circuit rider, The Rev. Anson Green, the next observer of the Cobourg scene: It was recorded in his diary, *The Life and Times of Anson Green (1877)*, that he was present in 1825 when Peter's Robinson's first contingent of Irish settlers, bound for Peterborough, arrived on the shore at Cobourg. He wrote:

"I saw the beach west of Division Street covered with small white tents filled with Irish immigrants. There was no wharf in Cobourg then, and the landing was somewhat difficult. These tents presented a beautiful and attractive appearance, They stretched along on the sand beach lying between the lake and a forest of small cedars which covered the worst part of the swampy ground east of Ham's mills".

This is a very important quote and was used by Edwin Guillet in his history of Cobourg 1798-1948. *Guillet never mentioned a barracks. Anson Green mentioned no buildings being present on the swampy lots east of Cobourg Creek in 1825. The grist mills were on the west side.*

In 1820 Nathan Williams received approval for his grant on lot 18 and promptly sold it to Ebenezer Perry. Records show that after receiving his grant Nathan Williams, having sold his lot, farmed in other locations. There was no action on the property until 1826 when Ebenezer Perry first appeared on assessment rolls. Perry would have probably spent the next five years draining and filling swampy lot 18 preparing it for sale or lease. He paid the taxes on lot 18 for some years and had extensive holdings in the town..

Ebenezer Perry was a rising star in the Cobourg firmament, which had been named three years earlier in 1817. Perry (1788-1876) was a U.E.L descendant, born in Ernesttown, who served in the War of 1812, probably at Fort Henry, Kingston, only a few miles way. He became a prominent merchant and miller in Cobourg.

After the war Perry came to the Amherst area and his stone mill, built in 1815 on present Pratt's pond, burned down in the 1850s and he erected it again in brick. The Pratt family didn't acquire the mill until 1889. It also burned in 1942 and remained vacant for many years. The mill has now been restored and is a restaurant today.

Perry also built a store with a stone facade in 1832 on King Street in Cobourg and his home, the Regency style Woodlawn Terrace, in 1835. Perry had his finger in most of the enterprises around early Cobourg. A prominent Methodist, he was on the building committee of Victoria College in 1832 and first president of the Board of Police in 1837. He was involved in both Cobourg railway enterprises and, it is said, a strong supporter of the Reform movement of 1837. Perry later served in the Legislative Assembly and was a senator there until his death. In early

days Cobourg was at one time called "Hardscrabble", and according to Senator Perry, "hard scrabbling it was".

1832 was a significant year for the Cobourg area.. In July of that year there were three important arrivals on the William IV steamer from Kingston:

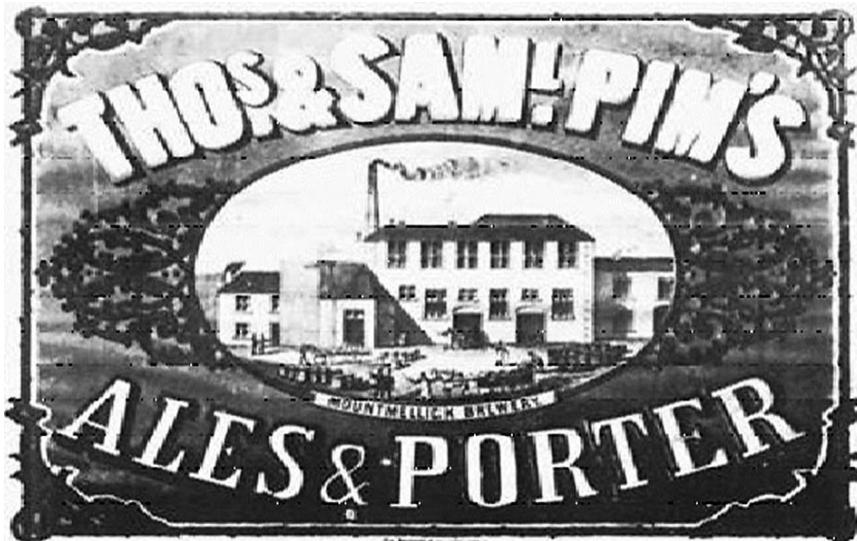
Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie with their husbands from England and last but not least a certain James Calcutt and family from Ireland.

We are all familiar with the lives of Moodie and Traill and their incomparable contribution to local history and Canadian literature but James Calcutt's story is more obscure. Unfortunately we have never been able to locate a photo of James Calcutt.

The *Cobourg Star* of Aug. 1, 1832, noted the arrival of James Calcutt and his family in Cobourg on the *William IV*. James had worked at a brewery in Mountmellick, Ireland, since the age of fourteen, probably at the establishment of Thomas and Samuel Pim, relatives of his mother.

Mountmellick is a town located in Queen's county, near Dublin. Calcutt eventually established his own brewery in Mountmellick, but it is said he fled from enemies there, the Whiteboys. They were a secret Catholic organization dedicated to persecuting Orangemen. Although Calcutt was not nominally an Orangeman his business was targeted and he was forced to flee with his family before he was ruined. There is a garbled story about Calcutt having been followed to Cobourg by one of them who accidentally fell off the *William IV* and was drowned, his body washing up on Calcutt's property. It is claimed that the body, identified as Phil Cassidy, was really James Dempsey, one of the Whiteboy terrorists from Ireland. Well he isn't talking! Makes a good story.

Whatever the reason he left, Calcutt had prospered in Ireland and came to Canada well supplied with cash and in the market for a property on which to erect a brewery in Cobourg. He chose to locate on Ebenezer Perry's lot 18.



Calcutt was open for business four months after his arrival here.



Calcutt's brewery was comprised of a malting house, kiln, a mill powered by 16 horses & a business office. Only this malting house remains.

On Dec. 10, 1832, he ran the following advertisement in the *Cobourg Star*:

COBOURG BREWERY

The undersigned begs to inform the Inhabitants of Cobourg that he has the above establishment now at full work, and has ready for delivery, Beer and Ale of excellent quality and also good fresh Yeast. James Calcutt N.B.- Wanted, 5,000 bushels of good malt barley for which the highest cash price will be paid on delivery. Calcutt's Ale and Malt became known all over the country and he was a public spirited individual, active in many Cobourg affairs. He was one of the first to pay for grain in cash instead of vouchers and his workers every Saturday night. By 1835 Calcutt had acquired three acres comprising Hibernia, Durham and Orr Streets built a grist mill and advertised a distillery:

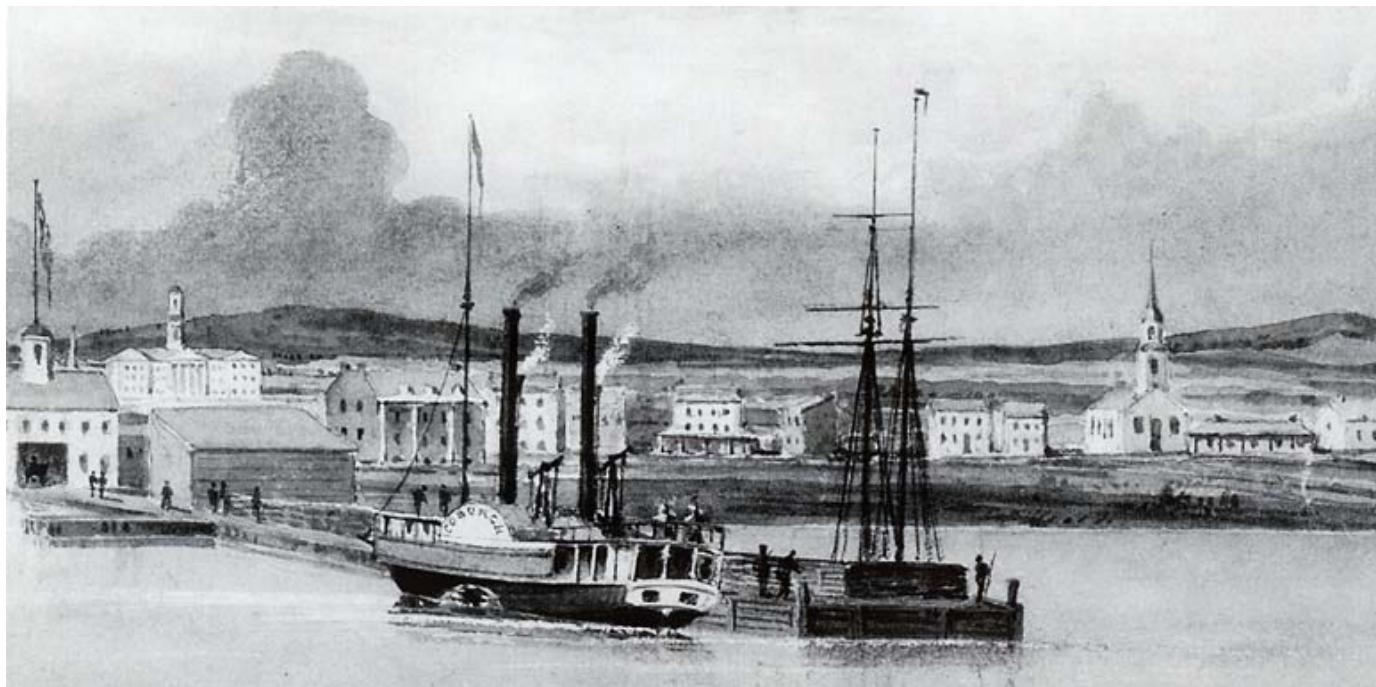
February 25, 1835

The subscriber having erected a distillery on the Irish and Scotch plan, in connection with his Brewery, and which he has now in full work begs to offer to his Friends and the Public: Pure Copper Distilled Malt Whisky of superior strength and flavour and which he will sell on such terms as will ensure him a share of their patronage. Superior Ale for Bottling and draught Ale on hand, as well.

James Calcutt, Cobourg Brewery and Distillery.

Calcutt's luxurious home, Lakehurst, is located on Durham Street just south of the Heritage Centre and is still occupied. It is improbable that Calcutt would have built the imposing brick house in 1832, the year he arrived in Cobourg. Assessment rolls show he and his large family were living elsewhere in town while his house was being built, one of the first of brick in Cobourg and is now painted white. It was 1841 before Calcutt was assessed as paying taxes on town lot 18.

James Calcutt Sr. never lived at the Breakers Motel, as one writer has speculated, but his son, James Jr., did purchase the house in the 1850s.



Here is Cobourg in the 1840s in a Painting by Philip Bainbridge

Cobourg grew by leaps and bounds in the 1830s and 40s. Mrs Traill called it a “neatly built and flourishing village”. Many tradesmen and residents were flooding in. It was now the centre of business in Hamilton Township. In this painting we can see St. Peter’s Church and Victoria College.

But alas, things began to change in the next decade. Victoria Hall was not finished until 1860 but the elaborate building nearly bankrupted the town along with the failure of the short lived railroad from Cobourg to Peterboro, built in 1854.

James Calcutt’s creditors defaulted and he was forced to sell his home, Lakehurst, and the brewery premises, which sat idle for some years. The Calcutts moved to Port Hope in 1859.

Ten years later James Calcutt Sr.(1792- 1869) died was buried at St. Peter’s Anglican Church Cemetery, Cobourg, in 1869 with both his wives, Here in part is his obituary printed in the *Cobourg Sentinel*: *“In all his dealings he was scrupulously honest, from the largest to the smallest transactions, and he endeavoured as a leading citizen to give a tone of fairness to every important event in our municipal history.”*

Three of Calcutt’s sons operated breweries in other locations. Kingsley on University Ave, in Cobourg, and James Jr. in Port Hope. The most successful was Henry, who established his own brewery in the Peterborough area.

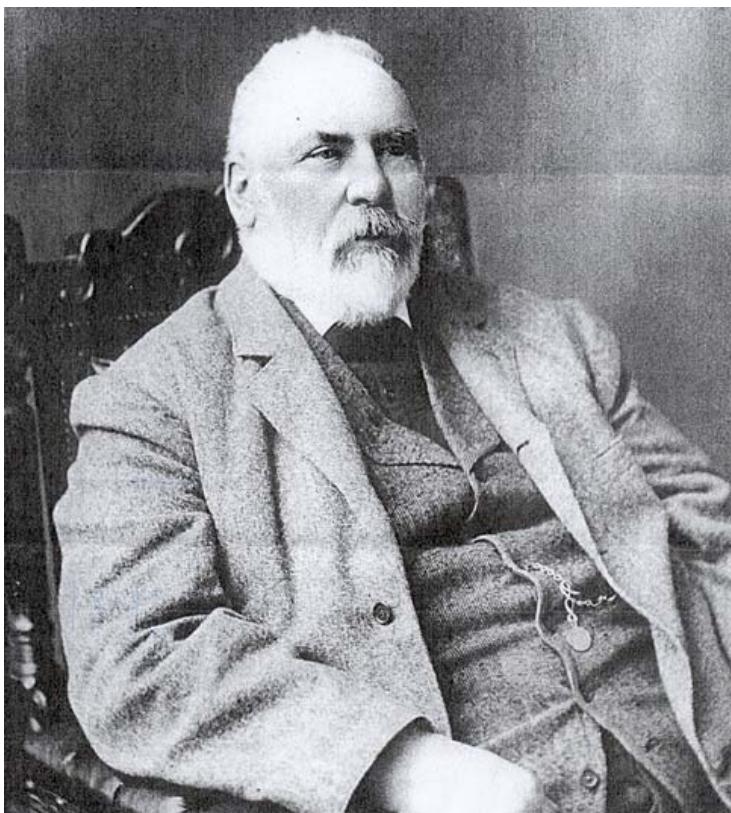
Henry was the fifth of James’ eleven children from his two marriages, and began brewing on his own in the Peterborough area at the age of eighteen, having learned the business from his father.

This is an artist’s conception of young Henry working in Ashburnham. At first he leased premises but after eight years, when they burned down, he built his own stone brewery in 1865, located in Ashburnham, where the ill-fated Cobourg-Peterborough railway had a turn-around.

It was said Henry was involved in the railway. He might have had stock but was not the founder or owner, nor responsible for its failure, as another writer erroneously states.



Here is Henry's stone brewery in Ashburnham with Henry and his wife, Isabella, in the buggy surrounded by their workers. The young man in the back of the buggy lifting his hat may be their only son, Clare.



Henry invented a method of cooling beer quickly that is still used today. He was granted the patent in 1895. His brewery survived until prohibition was brought in during the First World War.

Here is a prosperous looking Henry Calcutt c. 1895 -Dubbed the "Commodore", because he became involved in steamboats starting in the 1870s and had several built and operating on Rice Lake, besides several hotels around the shore.

Transportation to and from Gore's Landing and picnic excursions to Peterborough were popular around the turn of the last century. The "Calcutt's Steamers", mentioned in a *Cobourg World* news item, refers to the Commodore's steamboats, not a steam mill at Calcutt's brewery in Cobourg, as another writer also erroneously speculates.



And here is Henry Calcutt's first steamer, the Whistlewing. His boats were captained by his son, Clare, and Charles Calcutt, a nephew. Charles and his wife lived in Harwood and are buried at St. George's, Gore's Landing.

We now leave the Calcutt family and return to the brewery's fortunes in Cobourg

Charles Mackechnie, one of three Scottish brothers, bought the Calcutt property in 1863 and opened the "Victoria Brewery". A scribe for the *Cobourg Sentinel* of February 13, 1864, was very impressed with the "New Brewery" and devoted a whole article to its superiority, claiming, "It is as far removed from the old fashioned style of brewing as the steam engine is removed from the old oak ship. In capacity his malt

house alone would make a large brewery."

He enthused that the new building being erected was nearly as capacious as the old one, intended for a malt floor and kiln. T. Duncan from Edinburgh was the superintendent of the brewery and distillery. The old limestone building was probably used for storage. The *Cobourg Sentinel* writer was told the New Brewery could produce 1000 pure, unadulterated, wholesome gallons of beverage a day and he urged hotel keepers to buy locally rather than from Toronto or Kingston.

After the Mackechnies sold, according to Registry Office records the brewery property was mortgaged to various owners for the next 30 years until Owen Healy took over in 1895. On January 6, 1899, there was a fire and one building was destroyed. Which building is not identified nor is there a description of any remains, but there were insurance claims. In June of 1899 Healy and his partner applied for dissolution of partnership and it appears that was the end of any brewery operation on those premises.

One writer states that in 1901 the brewery burned to the ground in a "mysterious fire" and that the limestone building survived but had the roof damaged. That makes a dramatic ending to the brewery saga but there is no confirmation of a 1901 fire that I could discover in newspaper files. *After 1899 the ownership of the brewery property is lost in a sea of mortgages until the Cobourg Museum Foundation took over the building one hundred years later.*

Alcoholism was becoming a serious problem in the country and in the 1890s a strong temperance movement was arising. In fact, one of the main leaders of the movement in Canada was our own Letitia Creighton Youmans.

Letitia Youmans was born at Creighton Heights and began her extensive education at the little school at Hull's Corners. A powerful speaker, she became the first president of the WCTU in Canada (Women's Christian Temperance Union), lecturing in Canada, the US and Britain.

The Temperance Movement began to have an effect and Henry Calcutt in Peterboro became concerned about the dropping sales of beer and liquor in Ontario and toured the west looking for new markets. But when prohibition was introduced during the First World War that sounded the death knell of breweries and of many hotels in the area who depended on their bars for income .

All of us have read of the infamous era in the 30s of smuggling and rum running in the US that prohibition caused. I can remember serving at elections in GL. in the 70s when the township voted to become wet or dry. The "wets" finally won. Plainville church had a chapter of the WCTU and I can remember being a member when I first got married and being treated to lectures on the subject by the dear earnest ladies of the Plainville church. Up to that date liquor had never passed my lips!

Facts and Fancies

The "barracks" name originated in 1930 when someone writing in the *Cobourg Star* put forth the unfounded story it could have been erected for an army barracks and that myth has been perpetuated to this day. Even in 1930 there was no evidence presented of military use but since then some have become enamoured of the story, speculating that the limestone building had something to do with the War of 1812. Seduced by this romantic idea they have tried to manipulate the facts to fit. Others have refuted the "barracks" story as a fairytale for children. Much of what has been written about the early history of the Calcutt brewery has no foundation in fact and is not backed by research.

The building bears no resemblance to an early military shed but resembles malting houses in Ireland. Stone buildings were common from whence Calcutt emigrated.

Here are a corn mill near Calcutt's home in Ireland and a malting house and kiln. Note the length of the building and the windows. (not shown)



And this is a brewery in Mountmellick itself, Calcutt's hometown. These buildings were all constructed of limestone rubble quarried in the region. Limestone buildings abound in Ireland and many are still intact.

If there were such an unlikely stone building already in existence in Cobourg in 1832 why would Calcutt not have used it right away? It was certainly large enough to have accommodated a malting house immediately instead of waiting four months to open for business.

Compare stone work in James Calcutt's brewery (pages 37 and 44) and Irish brewery photo. The brewing of beer requires a fair amount of space and the size of the Cobourg building, number of windows, and the

chimneys at both ends denotes a far more important usage than just as a storage shed. The 90'x 20' limestone building has five 6 over 6 windows and two doors all on the south wall with a brick chimney at each end of the roof. It has been suggested that Calcutt wanted the building facing his house so he could keep watch on the premises. There is a long rectangular opening high in the west wall; it apparently was an access door to a loft.

Archeologist Dr. Laurence Jackson, who was employed to investigate the premises, told me he found no evidence of fireplaces and discovered the remains of burned coal. In pioneer days in Upper Canada buildings were heated only by fireplaces so the use of stoves points to a later date than 1812. Stoves were necessary because the brewing process requires steam. There were stoves and chimneys in the Cobourg building and bricks appear to have been included during its construction. There were no brickyards reported to be operating in Cobourg before 1830. Certainly there were none in 1812. The bricks in the east wall appear to be repairs to a crack.



Here is a photo of an old malting house in Hertfordshire, England, that is similar in style to the Cobourg building. Although it is much larger and constructed of brick, it has the same shed roof, a number of windows and a round aperture under the eaves. It is said the many windows are necessary because they would blow out in an explosion rather than the building collapse.

One thing that has always been puzzling about the Cobourg

building are these large holes on the end walls, surrounded with bricks laid in a fan pattern, just below each chimney at either end of the roof. The west one has been filled in with bricks. It has been suggested that the holes were meant for owls, presumably to catch rats, or even that the "owl holes" were punched in later.

There is a far more prosaic explanation: Matt Howell, a master brewer, explained to me that breweries *must* have ventilation due to the large amounts of heat and gases generated during the malting process and the temperature needs to be kept fairly constant all year round. Early malting houses had louvered vents or large chimneys.

When the McKechnies bought the brewery property in 1863 and constructed "a new building nearly as capacious as the old", the Cobourg newspaper contrasted the primitive, old brewing operation with the new modern machinery and fittings. That lends even more credence to the premise that James Calcutt built the original stone malting house. There has never been a description of the exteriors of any of the buildings so much is hearsay and guesswork.

Where did the limestone come from? There are a number of suggestions: One is that there was an old stone windmill in the vicinity of Calcutt's property and that the stone from that demolished windmill was used to build his malting house. Apparently there is also a basement nearby built of the same stone. Another is that it was local limestone from the lakeshore. The limestone walls could have been constructed by either bricklayers or stonemasons.

I suggest another possibility: Fort Henry in Kingston was built 1812-14 during the War.



Here is Old Fort Henry

The old fort was constructed of timber and earth and faced with limestone. In 1832-37 the old fort was demolished and replaced with the fort that still stands in Kingston today. The new fort bore no resemblance to the old one and was constructed of limestone blocks.



Here is Fort Henry's limestone ditch being constructed in 1832

It is possible that the summer of 1832 Calcutt had leftover or rejected blocks of limestone transported from Fort Henry to Cobourg by boat. There was a lot of traffic on Lake Ontario between the two towns. The material would probably be of the same composition as Cobourg limestone and the time period is right. Then there is Calcutt's connection with Ebenezer Perry, a veteran from Fort Henry area, who sold him the property. Perry built a store on King Street with a similar stone facade that same year 1832. Possibly, too, this could be the origin of the persistent barracks legend and the connection to the War of 1812.

Dr. Jackson never found any evidence of buttons or coins to support the barracks myth nor of early human habitation upon excavating portions of the building's present sandy floor. He did discover some artifacts from late in the 19th century such as animal bones, china, toys etc. and that the original floor and that a later one had been constructed of wood, showing that the building had once had flooring.. He found evidence of a stable and it is said that the Amours, later owners of Lakehurst, used the building for stabling their horses and must have removed the wooden floor.. It is known that a blacksmith once had a forge at the east end and that at one time there was a laundry operation there. Within living memory items from demolished buildings were sold from the premises.

One must remember 1832 was still very early in the development of commerce and business in Upper Canada. When one discounts the improbable “barracks” story, there can be no other conclusion than that the primitive limestone building was built for Calcutt during the four months after his arrival. Why not use brick in the beginning? No doubt a stone building would have been more familiar to an Irishman, more secure from fire and rodents than frame and cheaper to build than brick. Thirty years later his son, Henry, also built his brewery of stone in the Peterborough area..

Whatever its age it remains a fascinating building and it is a miracle that Calcutt’s old limestone brewery has avoided fire or demolition and is still standing. Kudos to those who, with vision and hard work, are endeavouring to restore the building and planning a future museum. A suggestion has been made that a display of early brewing methods and artifacts, even some hops growing around the entrance, would be informative and interesting..

By the process of elimination and taking all the present evidence into consideration, there can be no doubt the limestone building was constructed by James Calcutt in 1832. A more appropriate name than the “barracks” would be “The Old Brewery”.

Editor’s Note: The original presentation had a large number of graphics and photos. Many were not suitable for reproducing in the format of this review so only some of them are reproduced here. Text has had some minor editing to suit.

April 2011

Cobourg Memorabilia
Items of interest to Cobourgites
Organized by Dorothy De Lisle
With Dean Elliott, Terry Barker and John Jolie

At our April Meeting, Dorothy De Lisle organized the presentation of some historical artifacts of interest. Some of these are shown below.





